This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

1817
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

322
S649a

828
5649a

Smith, Horatio

ADAM BROWN,

THE MERCHANT.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF BRAMBLETYE HOUSE, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

"When novelty's the rage, and love of change,
And things are doated on because they're strange,
How shall he fare whose unaspiring hack
Jogs on the broadway and the beaten track,
Leaps o'er no moral fence, nor dares to prance
In the wild regions of untried romance?"

CHARLES MOORE.

VOLUME III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1843.

London:
Printed by William Clowes and Sons,
Stamford Street.

Libr.
Blaisher
2-7-33
27667

ADAM BROWN.

CHAPTER I.

Not without difficulty, even when enjoying the composure of his bed, could Allan deliberate upon the events of the past day, for they had succeeded one another with such rapidity as almost to bewilder his faculties. His unexpected arrest would have been obliterated from his memory by the all-absorbing interest of his mother's alarming seizure, had it not prevented, though only for a short time, his seeking the means of immediately flying to her bed-side; and even this object, previously so paramount in his mind, yielded to the harrowing excitement of the spectacle he had witnessed in the unfurnished

it was finally dispelled by the summons of the porter, who had been ordered to call him in time for the early coach.

Now that he was on the point of quitting London, now that his heart thrilled and yearned with the hope of shortly embracing his mother and Walter, the fear of being again arrested by the sheriff's officer, improbable as it was, amounted to a nervous agony. Afraid to look his fellow-passengers in the face, he huddled himself up into a corner of the coach, drawing his hat over his eyes, and feigning to be asleep, until he had furtively peered at each in succession, and ascertained that there was no ground for his misgivings; and even then, apprehensive that there might be an enemy on the outside, he remained muffled up until, when they descended to take refreshments, he had strictly scrutinised their persons, after which process he regathered courage, and was unvisited by any further alarms.

Reaching Cheltenham without accident, he took horse immediately, and rode full speed to Woodcote. his bosom throbbing, as he

hastily dismounted at the gate of the cottage, with mingled hope and fear, though the latter predominated when, casting his eye up to the window of his mother's bedroom, he saw that it was partly open. All doubt was quickly converted into certainty and delight, for Walter rushed suddenly from the house, exclaiming, as he folded him in his arms, "She is safe—she is safe,—she is out of danger!"

"Thank God!" sobbed Allan, pressing his brother to his heart, while both freely wept the sweet tears of joy and gratitude, and embraced each other with a cordiality so ardent that for some time it could find no vent in words.

Anxious as he was to conceal every emotion that might agitate the patient, Allan again melted into tears of joy at finding his beloved mother so much better than he had expected, her faculties never having been impaired, and her speech being restored, although it was still slightly affected by the paralytic attack with which she had been seized. Her medical attendant, seeing no

reason to anticipate a second attack, had declared that even this trivial hesitation would gradually disappear, and now pronounced her out of all immediate danger. These tidings allowed him to enjoy a long and tender colloquy with the patient, who felt so surprisingly revived as well as rejoiced by his presence, that she would willingly have continued it to a late hour, had not the gentle and the thoughtful Walter reminded her that she might be exerting herself beyond her strength, and that Allan, whose looks betrayed the fatigue of his journey, would do well to retire to rest. Following up this suggestion, Walter took a book from the table, and commenced reading the evening prayers, selecting the same special thanksgiving for deliverance from any great danger which his mother had so feelingly recited when he had escaped being drowned in the brook. Grateful for her comparative restoration, as well as for his own deliverance from recent perils, Allan's heart responded to every word, as it fell upon his ear with the soft and touching accents of his brother;

and, after fresh embraces, retiring to bed in a far different frame of mind from the fearful perturbation of the previous night, he soon forgot all his fatigues and anxieties in a sleep which continued unbroken until Walter entered his room on the following morning to apprise him that he had already seen his mother, who declared that the sight of Allan must have operated as a charm, so wonderfully did she feel strengthened and restored.

Leisure having been afforded him, during his long drive to Cheltenham, to meditate upon the circumstances of his flight from London, he began to fear that his evasion from the custody of the sheriff's officer, viewed perhaps by the law as tantamount to prison-breaking, might assume a graver character of offence, and subject him to more serious responsibilities, than he had ever contemplated. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, under feelings of high excitement, he had, in fact, never paused to weigh the possible consequences of his proceeding; but as these forced themselves upon his attention, he determined to make the best

atonement in his power by returning with as little delay as possible to his former place of confinement,—a resolution which he was still more eager to execute now that he had seen his mother, and had ascertained that she was in a fair way of recovering.

Not for worlds would he have distressed her affectionate heart—to say nothing of the disgrace it would inflict upon himself—by relating what had happened; but though he might suppress a portion of the truth, he disdained to utter a falsehood, and therefore declared that his engagement with Crevetti, and the necessity of keeping together his pupils, would compel him, however painful to his feelings, to tear himself away from Woodcote that night. In sooth, this was one, though not the most powerful, of the motives that urged him back, for Crevetti's means of subsistence, as well as his own, would be seriously compromised by his prolonged absence.

While walking in the garden with his brother after they had breakfasted together, he advanced the same reasons for his declin-

ing to call upon any of their neighbours during his short and hurried visit, and then, turning the conversation, for he felt it painful to have any concealments from one who had hitherto enjoyed his perfect confidence, and had done nothing to forfeit it, he suddenly exclaimed, "And now, dear Walter, you must tell me all the news of Woodcote, enlightening me, first and foremost, as to the state of your love affair with Ellen Molloy."

"Upon that subject I have little or nothing to communicate, save that our marriage, I am sorry to say, is as far off as ever. And yet I know not why I should say I am sorry, for I am very, very happy in being recognised as her lover; and as to dear Ellen, you would hardly know her again, so much is she improved in health, spirits, and appearance since you left us. You will see her of course before you fly away again?"

"I had rather not—indeed it would be much better that I shouldn't."

"Better! Why so?"

"Oh, I don't know; the parting of friends is always painful. I ran away before, you know, without bidding her adieu. Yet, if you wish it, dear Walter, I will call upon her. Somehow or other—whence it arises I cannot tell—but methinks our parting now would not be so painful to me as it would have been when I last left Woodcote."

Had Allan been aware of the state of his own heart he would have attributed this diminished interest not solely to the effects of separation, and to the altered position in which Ellen stood as the affianced wife of his brother, but to that profound admiration and deep regard for Isola, of which, though it was as yet unsuspected by himself, the seeds had been already implanted in his bosom, and were strengthened in their development by every fresh interview. But we must not anticipate the progress and results of this unconscious attachment. "Latterly," pursued Walter, "both Ellen and myself were made very unhappy by the pointed attentions of Sir Gregory Cavendish's son, during the continuance of which

Captain Molloy seemed disposed to withdraw the conditional sanction that he had given to our marriage; but as the coxcomb has now accompanied his father and sister to London, and has, apparently, abandoned a flirtation which had probably no other object than his temporary amusement, the Captain is as friendly to us as he was before."

"Did dear Ellen—did Ellen Molloy, I mean—imagine him to be serious in his attentions?"

"*That* she could not tell; but, knowing him to be impertinent in his admiration as well as stupidly fulsome in his flattery, she viewed him with daily increasing disgust, and was never so happy as when he turned his back upon Woodcote. For my part, I am half sorry that he did not persevere in his advances, for if he had been pressed upon her acceptance,—a contingency which we strongly apprehended,—she had consented to marry me at once."

"And what has become of the poor mad lady, of whose strange introduction to the

Manor-House you wrote me such an interesting account?"

"She remains there still, quite restored in bodily health, and contriving to charm every one by her personal beauty and the elegance of her manners and deportment, but without any improvement in her mental malady, though the Cheltenham doctor maintains his opinion that her alienation is not of a permanent character."

"And has no discovery yet been made as to who she is, and whence she comes?"

"None whatever."

"How very singular! And does our worthy friend like this addition to his household?"

"In my opinion—yes, for it affords him something to think of, something to do, and assists him in killing—what he begins to feel as his greatest enemy—time."

"And what of our other friends?"

"Captain Molloy has lately returned from Cheltenham, whence he seems to have brought a supply of cash,—how obtained I cannot tell you,—for he has been making an

unusual parade of bank-notes, and has decked out Matilda in a showy pelisse and bonnet that are the admiration of all Woodcote. Mr. Crab is much as you left him—kind and generous as ever to those whom he respects, caustic and biting as ever towards those whom he cannot esteem. The old soldier, as they call him, or, in other words, Farmer Chubbs, whose drunken habits seem to be incurable, has had an execution in his house, and is going to rack and ruin as fast as he can, so that poor Fanny's marriage with Harry Groombridge is not much more advanced than my own."

Walter then made brief mention of several of their poorer neighbours, and of the trifling services which he and his mother had been enabled to render them, concluding with the statement that their little cob was in capital condition, and expressing a hope that his brother would walk down to see him in the Friar's Field, of which Mr. Brown had kindly permitted him to have the run. "In the mean time," continued Walter, "pray admire this garden-chair

that I have constructed for our dear mother, and this new hencoop, and the ornamented front of the tool-house,—the last triumphs of my skill in carpentry; reserving, however, no small portion of your admiration for my exertions as a gardener, especially when you recollect that I have no one now to assist me. Here are my blanching-pots for the sea-kale of which our dear mother is so fond, and the plants are well earthed up: this is my asparagus-bed; does it not do me credit? This winter spinach I have left to run to seed; look at these cauliflowers—but you don't care for vegetables, you never did. Well, then, come and give me credit for my flowers. See! I have already placed hoop-arches with matting over my tulips, ranunculuses, and anemones, to defend them from the rain and sun;—under these bell glasses I have planted some tender annuals of the sorts that mother likes best;—did you ever see anything finer than my double wall-flowers, especially this Bloody Warrior?—and my poppies, and common hyacinths, and sweet-peas, will, I hope, receive a due

meed of your commendation, considering how many I have gathered, for I have always had a handsome nosegay to place upon mother's table, besides carrying one across the common, almost every day, for dear Ellen. Ah, Allan! you little fancy how often I have thought of you, and wished with a sigh that you were again by my side, when I have been tending your favourite flowers, or tying up the lettuces that you were so fond of in your salads."

As Allan wrung his hand in silent acknowledgment, his heart yearned with more than usual fondness towards the brother who, even in cultivating his garden, made so lowly an occupation stimulate his highest and best affections, thus literally uniting earth to that heaven which may be attained even here below, in domestic love. What a contrast, he thought, do these simple pleasures, and Walter's tranquil country life, present to the glittering gaieties, the tumultuous dissipation of London, and the anxieties, temptations, and perilous adventures in which I have been condemned to

figure since I left my quiet home! Even, however, while thus moralizing, his inmost heart whispered that there were charms and attractions in the metropolis which might go far towards compensating the risks to which its residents were exposed: for in what other locality could one hope to find an Isola Guardia? Too modest, however, or perhaps too subtle, to assign its superiority to this allurement, he attributed it to the greater intellectual advancement, the more widely diffused refinement and urbanity of manners, the easier access to the master-pieces of art and enlightened society,—to those manifold resources, in short, for a man of cultivated taste, which none but a large capital can supply. Dear as Walter was to him at this moment, perhaps more so than he had ever been before, his perceptions, rendered keen, not to say fastidious, by his own residence in the metropolis, did not fail to notice in him a simplicity of character and unfashionable homeliness of attire that imparted to him a certain degree of rusticity. Was he secretly sensible of

his own superiority in these respects, as he saw his brother kneeling down in the dirt to tie up a flower? We know not; but we can confidently reiterate that, whatever might have been his impression as to Walter's occupation and external appearance, his love and his respect for the inner man, so far from suffering diminution, had gathered increase.

Returning to the house, Allan passed a long and most delightful day in the society of his family, and, after having received his mother's solemn blessing, accompanied by the most affectionate embraces, he took his leave, not without tears on all sides, threw himself into the evening mail, and was presently whirling along the road, distressed in feeling by the recent parting, and saddened by the thought that his journey was to terminate in a prison, whence he saw no immediate prospect of being extricated.

On the morning of his arrival in London he was driven to Cursitor Street, filled with anxious qualms as to the penalty of his recent escapade, though his voluntary sur-

render, he thought, ought to plead in mitigation of his offence. This apology he had begun to urge on his arrival, when the sheriff's officer rudely interrupted him by exclaiming, with a sardonic grin, "You're a precious humbug, ar'n't you? Voluntary surrender! I like that! Hang me if I ever knew a more canting cove! Much I should have seen of you and your voluntary surrender if the bill hadn't been taken up and paid with costs."

"Paid! you astonish me. When?—how?—by whom?"

"Come, come, I'm not to be gammoned by a regular knowing one setting up for a flat. What! you don't know, I suppose, that it was all put up last night, and the blunt and costs sent by the singing woman?"

"By Signora Guardia?"

"Ay, it was some such outlandish name as that;—but I tell you what, my kiddy! if I had caught you t'other night when you gave me leg-bail at the Post Office,—and hang me if I know where you bolted to!—

I warrant I would have cured you for one while of coming the sneak upon me!"

So saying he turned on his heel and walked off in high dudgeon, leaving Allan to congratulate himself on being delivered from the clutches of such a coarse and vindictive gaoler, and not a little bewildered as to the unexpected discharge of the debt for which he had been incarcerated.

Eager as he was to solve this mystery by hurrying to Isola, he would not do so until he had first proceeded to his own lodgings to arrange his toilet, for he had latterly paid an unusual attention to his dress whenever he intended to call upon her, without suspecting the secret motive that rendered him so scrupulous. As Isola, who never kept very matutinal hours, had not yet made her appearance, he seated himself in the drawing-room, and, taking up a newspaper in order to beguile the time, began carelessly to peruse its contents, when his attention was arrested by the following paragraph:—

"Fatal Accident on the River.—As Captain Harcourt of Richmond, and two friends,

were rowing themselves to London, late on Thursday evening, the wherry struck against Putney Bridge and capsized, throwing the whole party into the water. Two of the gentlemen were saved by clinging to the pier, but we regret to state that the Captain was unfortunately drowned. Although rewards have been offered for the recovery of the body, it had not been found at a late hour last night."

"So, then," thought Allan, as he reperused the paragraph, "the poor man's death was not occasioned by violence or outrage of any sort, as I for a moment suspected, and I have done injustice to the fellows who made so free with his remains. His decease is accounted for, but still the enigma is but partially solved; for why should his body have been undressed and wrapped in a shroud, only to be again attired in his own garments? why should it have been conveyed, with so many circumstances of secrecy, to an obscure, uninhabited house in the City? and, above all, why should the men represent themselves as being engaged

in an illegal and most perilous enterprise, if, having found the corpse in the river, they were merely going to convey it to his friends, to claim the reward announced in this paragraph? That such was their object would seem the most probable supposition; but why not pursue it openly? why dress up the deceased with so much——? And now I recollect that the clothes were perfectly dry, —the letters that I took from his pockets were unwet, unsoiled,—none of his attire bore the appearance of having been immersed in the water. Every part of the adventure, therefore, appears to be involved in a deeper mystery than ever, except his death; but, that being satisfactorily explained, I know not that I am bound to take any further notice of the occurrence, strange and suspicious as it may still seem."

"Ah, Camillo, my brother! have I then found the runaway?" exclaimed the silvery voice of Isola, as she flew into the room, holding out both hands to welcome her visitant, and throwing back her head with one of those irresistible and sunny smiles which

cannot be described, and which, when once seen, could never be forgotten.

"Yes, Isola, here I am once more, and indebted to you, if I have been rightly informed, for my liberty: but before I thank you for your generosity, let me ask who informed you of my imprisonment."

"Your landlady communicated it to Antonio, from whom I learnt it on my return to London, when, not deeming it decorous that a *prima donna* should have a brother under arrest for so trifling a sum, I sent for an attorney, and desired him to save me from that disgrace by effecting your liberation."

"Isola! my dear sister, since you allow me to call you so,—you are all kindness, all goodness,—still more noble and high souled than I had thought: my heart must thank you, for language would but feebly express my gratitude. But, indeed, indeed, this debt must not remain. You have more than once confessed that you valued every pound, because you viewed it as the means of expediting your return."

"Yes,—that I might again behold my

Italian Camillo; and I have advanced this trifle that I might have the pleasure of again seeing my English Camillo. Is it not well bestowed?" And she again shook both his hands with a welcoming cordiality.

"You are determined to overcome, to overwhelm me," said Allan; "but I must not leave you to suppose that you have been assisting either a spendthrift, or one who would recklessly make his escape from legal confinement, unless under an excitement that might almost be pronounced a temporary alienation of mind." He then succinctly stated the circumstances under which he had endorsed Mr. Delaval's bill, the alarming letter from Walter, his own escape from the lock-up-house, his mother's convalescence, and his immediate return to Cursitor Street for the purpose of again placing himself in custody.

"I am prouder than ever of my Camillo," cried Isola as he concluded,—an averment which her sparkling eyes fully supported; "and I envy your mother the possession of such a son."

"Ah, Isola! if you knew my brother Walter, you would envy her still more, for he is a better and more affectionate son than I am."

"Impossible!—but, as we cannot settle that point, you shall give me some tidings—pleasant ones, I hope—of your lady-love, your *sweetheart* (that is the most charming word in your English language). Of course you did not visit Woodcote without seeing her?"

"I do not understand your allusion,—I have no lady-love at Woodcote."

"Nay, nay, you cannot disavow it, for Crevetti—not betraying any confidence, I trust—informed me that——"

"Yes, I recollect now;—I told him that I left Woodcote partly on account of an attachment, but that——"

"'The course of true love never did run smooth,'—I'll finish the quotation for you. Well, well! you must live in hopes, recollecting that faint heart never yet won fair lady."

"Let me again assure you that Crevetti must have mistaken me."

"No, Camillo, I will not be persuaded; your blushes—how I do respect you for retaining that bashful faculty!—your blushes refute your assertion. But the subject pains you,—let us then change it, for the day of your liberation should be all happiness, all pleasant and mutual congratulation."

At this moment Antonio entered the room holding a letter, while his old sunburnt furrowed features were lighted up with a flare of significant delight, which his mistress instantly perceiving and interpreting, snatched the paper from his hand, and had no sooner glanced at the superscription than she uttered a scream of joy that echoed through the chamber. With blushing face, palpitating bosom, and trembling hands, she tore it open, ran her eager sparkling eyes rapidly over its contents, pressed it repeatedly to her lips and her heart when she had concluded, fell suddenly upon her knees, clasped her uplifted hands together, and, by the devout enthusiastic expression of her face, seemed to be offering a mental thanksgiving to Heaven for the tidings she had just re-

ceived. Again starting to her feet, she abandoned herself to one of those sudden revulsions of feeling which, in any but a person of southern temperament, would appear hardly consistent with her recent genuflexion, and, joyously ejaculating, "It is from Camillo, dear Camillo! he is well—he is happy—he is prosperous!" she seized Allan by the hand, waltzed him vehemently round the room until he was giddy, relaxed her hold, threw herself upon a sofa, and burst into an hysterical passion of mingled tears and laughter.

CHAPTER II.

LEAVING the impressionable Italian, whose changes of mood were not less rapid than extreme, in a state of comparative tranquillity, Allan hastened to visit those pupils whose lessons he had been compelled to forego, and who readily received his apologies when they learnt the cause of his temporary absence. After the fatigues of a long day spent in this occupation, he returned to his lodgings, where, to his no small surprise, he found Harry Freeman, indolently lolling in one chair, his legs supported by another, a cigar in his mouth, and a card in his hand, on the back of which he was sketching a pen-and-ink caricature, with all the spirit and humour of an artist.

"*You* here!" exclaimed Allan: "I thought you were enacting the parts of Hamlet, Sylvester Daggerwood, and half a dozen others, at Elmsley Hall, in Gloucestershire."

"Rehearsing them, you mean. So I have been, my hearty! and last night was to have been our grand flare-up performance: half the country invited—ball and supper afterwards—prime spread—lots of bigwigs and bang-up swells; but it's no go—all off—adjourned *sine die*—can't play without their first fiddle, their *magnus Apollo*—wouldn't do to leave out Hamlet and Daggerwood, and can't have him, seeing as how that 'ere rum mister as was to act 'em is at this here wery minute a-sitting right afore ye."

"What hurried you away at such a moment?"

"A scrawl of black and white from one Allan Latimer, stating that he was grabbed by the bailiffs and locked up in a sponging-house; on receipt of which I sent instantly for a bit of yellow and pair, and rattled off slap-bang to London, leaving the rest of the

company completely horrified at losing their tragedian, comedian, singer, stage-manager, prompter, scene-painter, and factotum, all at one fell swoop."

"I am vexed beyond measure that you should have put yourself and the whole party to such inconvenience on my account."

"What! do you think I would stay there tom-fooling while you were in quod, and partly on my account too? for I find Delaval bamboozled you by mentioning my name. Curse the fellow's impudence! to come the thimblerig over you by saying that *I* would have endorsed his bill! Know the chap too well."

"I certainly acted very foolishly in complying with his request."

"Like a rank spoon—a downright donkey, my dear fellow, that's all; but I've got you out of the scrape famously: been dodging him these two days—know his haunts, though he's a sly old Levanter—pinned him at last, mug to mug, and told him that, if he didn't fork out the flimsies for the bill and costs, I'd show him up all over London

and spoil his sport; vhereupon, as ve says vhen ve drives our vife to Vest Vickham in a vone 'orse shay, he came down with the blunt, like a gentleman, as he isn't."

"You don't mean that he paid the bill?"

"Every farthing; and I handed over the tin to the Signora an hour or two ago, so that you now owe her nothing but gratitude for her generous interference. What a trump-card, what a regular right-hearted good 'un that woman is!"

"How shall I ever thank you for all your kindness?"

"Come, come, tip us no blarney! As I was the means of getting you into limbo, what the deuce could I do less than get you out again? Lucky that I knew how to run Delaval to earth."

"And what *is* this specious fellow who talks so boastingly of his great acquaintance? The sheriff's officer termed him a flat-catcher."

"No bad name for him. Delaval is half a gentleman, half a loose fish about town—in short, a gambler, who makes a flare-up or

fights shy, according to his success or failure at the roulette-table, which is his favourite game. When he is cleaned out and has no tin, he flies kites—draw bills—gets flats and spoons (present company always excepted, you know) to endorse them—takes them to the Jews, or such worthies as your friend Mr. Smales, who advance money upon them —returns to the table—and, when he makes a lucky hit, takes up one bill and draws another. He is of good family, and has moved among bigwigs of whom he still loves to talk; but he'll probably end as a flash-man, or by driving a Bath or Brighton rumble-tumble,—and that 'ere's all vot I knows on him."

"And more than enough to prevent my wishing to know any more of him."

"*In* course! you must shelve him—tip him the cold shoulder. But, Allan, my fine fellow, this bush-fighting and a London life doesn't seem to suit you: you look pale; and if you'll take the advice of such a particularly sage Mentor as Harry Freeman, you'll consult some equally sage Esculapian

(if you can find him) touching the state of your body politic; and so good bye, and take care of yourself—I'm back in another hour to Elmsley Hall, for the whole neighbourhood will go into asterisks if they don't soon recover their Hamlet and Sylvester Daggerwood. But harkye, my dear fellow! if you get into any further troubles, or want any assistance that I can supply, tip me a line, and *in* course, vherever I may be playing Punch, I'll pitch Judy to the devil, and vhip up to Lonnon afore ever you can say Jack Robinson." With a most cordial shake of both hands, while his open handsome countenance was lighted up with a friendly smile that attested the depth and sincerity of his feelings, whatever might be the levity of his manner, Harry, without waiting for any acknowledgments, quitted the room, carelessly, and yet charmingly singing an opera air as he sauntered downstairs. While he seemed to notice nothing and to care for nothing, he had a quick eye and a feeling heart, and he was quite right as to the state of Allan's health, which

had been so much disordered by the atmosphere of the metropolis, coupled with his recent fatigues and excitement, that he himself felt the want of a little change, though he hardly knew how to accomplish it consistently with his avocations, which would only allow a short absence from London. At the suggestion of Isola, who had also noticed his pallid looks, he put himself on board the Saturday's steamer for Gravesend, intending to return early on the following Tuesday,—a trip which would give him as much change of air as could well be accomplished in so short a time. Evening was approaching when he arrived at Gravesend; he wished to escape from the people who had crowded the boat, and were now thronging to the different inns; and, quitting the town, he walked on to the village of Higham, for the purpose of visiting Gad's Hill, of which such pleasant mention is made in Shakspere's play of 'Henry the Fourth.'

Tempted by the warmth and fineness of the night, he wandered over this vicinity for some time, when, finding that the hour

was getting late, and that he was too much fatigued to return to Gravesend, he betook himself to the hostelry of the place, an ancient building, occupying, as it was said, the site of a nunnery founded by King Stephen, and inquired whether he could sleep there. "Ay, that you may," replied the hostess, "and in the best room too; and you may be sure your bed 'll be well aired, for the Quaker gentleman who slept in it last night prefers a small room at the back of the house, which does seem raythe queer, only there's no accounting for tastes, you know, Sir, and them Quakers is such an odd set."

Assenting to this proposition, Allan partook of such supper as they placed before him, and immediately retired to his bed, which stood in the dark arched recess of a large old-fashioned room. Just as he was sinking into sleep he heard some one open the door,—for he had never thought of fastening it,—and a man walked into the chamber, perfectly unconscious, as it would seem by his motions, that it contained any

other occupant, for he deposited the candle which he held, upon a table, and proceeding to a chest of drawers, opened one, whence he drew out a brace of pocket-pistols. Somewhat alarmed at this proceeding, Allan remained perfectly motionless, with his eyes fixed upon the intruder, who was attired like a Quaker, but whose features he could not distinguish, from the position in which he stood. In another minute, however, the figure returned to the table, sat down beside it, and examined the pans and priming of his weapons, in such a posture that the light flared full upon his face, when Allan, shuddering with horror and amazement, felt his blood run cold within him, for he distinctly beheld the features of Captain Harcourt! Yes, spite of the Quaker disguise—yes, spite of the dead body seen in the uninhabited house—*there* sat before him, living, and apparently in perfect health, the very man whose corpse, unless his senses had strangely deceived him, he had so lately seen and touched.

Few persons could be less subject to

superstitious terrors; yet such had been his momentary appalment at sight of what he might well deem a spectral apparition, that it was an incalculable relief to feel convinced he was gazing upon a living fellow-creature, though he saw that he was armed, and had every reason to believe him a nefarious and dangerous character. All ground of apprehension, however, was presently dispelled, for the stranger secured in his bosom the pistols, which he had apparently forgotten when he had changed his room, took up the candle, quitted the chamber, and was heard walking up the stairs, as if returning to his own apartment.

To prevent the reappearance of so unwelcome a visitant, whatever might be his nature, Allan arose, locked the door, and, returning to his bed, remained for a long time lost in vain conjectures as to the incomprehensible spectacle by which his faculties had been bewildered. That the fashionable, or, to speak more accurately, the flashy-looking Captain Harcourt (even supposing him not to have been drowned), should be meta-

morphosed into a Quaker, seemed as unlikely as that he should be a solitary wanderer in that sequestered spot; but on the other hand, it was equally inconsistent that one of "the Society of Friends," and consequently a man of peace, should have provided himself with fire-arms. Even when he fell asleep, after a long balancing of probabilities and possibilities, his dreams, influenced doubtless by the vision he had seen, conjured up such a wild phantasmagoria of images, that, on awaking soon after daylight, he was inclined to believe the whole impression was neither more nor less than the result of a nightmare.

Unable to sleep, he dressed himself and again rambled into the country, directing his footsteps towards the banks of the river. An hour or two had been passed in wandering through fields interspersed with copses and plantations, when he reached a patch of rough grass and underwood shelving down to the river, and crowned with an old oak-tree, still bushy and umbrageous in its lower boughs, although its topmost branches

were bare and cankered. The locality reminded him of one of his favourite school-boy haunts, in sympathy with which reminiscence, or perhaps to escape from the heat of a sultry morning, he accepted the invitation of a gnarled trunk covered with stumps, climbed up it, and embowered himself in the shade of the clustering leaves, where he found amusement some time in watching the sails of the many vessels passing up and down the river.

He had always been an admirer of the country, but he was now an admirer of Isola also; and, to a lover's eye, the charms of nature are enhanced by recalling the beauty of her who reigns paramount in his thoughts. Never had he been so much enchanted with a prospect as while he thus sat amid the boughs, gazing upon the landscape and thinking of Isola. Earth, with its buds and springing corn, whispered pleasant prophecies of flowers, and perfume, and of many a song-resounding harvest-home,—all of which mentally enwreathed themselves into a delightful repast in some visionary

floral bower, gladdened by the presence and the melodious voice of Isola. The homeward-bound vessels, and the merry meetings that awaited their happy crews, suggested his own glad return to the society of Isola. Nature, pushing up through the soil her myriad gift-laden hands, conjured up the thought of what he would gladly do for Isola, had he the power. In the music of the winds, the waves, the birds, he heard the voice of Isola, and the echo, from his own heart, breathed back the same welcome sound. Let it not be imagined that there was any profanation in the devotional feeling with which his bosom glowed, even while thus yearning towards a human object, for there is the sympathy of gratitude between earthly and celestial love, when the former is pure and our budding hopes have yet received no blight.

After having indulged for some time in such thoughts and sensations, Allan, turning his eyes in a new direction, started as he saw the last night's Quaker, whom he had been reasoning into the unsubstantial crea-

tion of a nightmare, walking towards the tree with most unquestionable appearances of flesh-and-blood reality, for he paused for a moment, took a deliberate survey of the river with a small telescope, and again advanced, making the branches crackle as he dashed through an opposing clump of bushes. He drew nearer, he stood in the shade of the tree, he took off his broad-brimmed hat and wiped his perspiring forehead, after which he removed his coloured neckcloth and substituted a white one, for the apparent completion of his Quaker costume, during which operation his observer in the tree, who watched all his proceedings with an intense interest, distinctly noticed the well-known scar, extending from the chin to the throat, which attested his identity with Harcourt. As if to remove all doubt upon this subject, the stranger exclaimed, looking at his watch, "It is five minutes beyond the time, and I see no boat. Curse the fellow! where can he have got to?"—words which, though few, convinced their hearer that they could be uttered by none

but the Captain, so peculiar was the tone of his almost feminine voice.

In a few minutes a boat was seen emerging from beneath a bank tufted with bushes; the Quaker figure held up his hat as a signal, hurried down to the edge of the water, and jumped with alacrity into the boat, which was rowed rapidly back in the direction whence it came, and again disappeared, hidden by the sudden rising of the land.

"From his being armed and disguised," thought Allan, "this fellow has been manifestly guilty of some illegal act, and I am by no means sure that I ought to suffer him to escape from the hands of justice, which, by his haunting this sequestered neighbourhood, and stealing thus covertly from the shore, is evidently his present object. What right, however, have I to detain him? Of what can I accuse him, unless of a gross inconsistency with himself in not being dead? If my senses have not utterly deceived me,—if, in fact, I possess my senses and am a living man,—that figure was Captain Harcourt, and *he* ought to be a corpse—a trim reckoning

which refutes itself by a *reductio ad absurdum!* Altogether it is a mystery so inscrutable, that I verily believe, were I to puzzle my brain in its solution, the attempt would drive me mad, unless, as I am half inclined to suspect, I am mad already. Seeing, as I have lately experienced, is not always good ground for believing; but I may as well watch this skulking runaway as long as I am able, for I may perchance be enabled at some future day not only to solve the enigma connected with him, but to bring him to the punishment which I am sure he merits." So saying, he descended from the tree, and, hastening to a spot that overhung the river, perceived the boat pulling across the stream towards Tilbury Fort, where it was finally lost to his straining eyes amid the vessels lying off the opposite shore, and the hazy vapours engendered by the heat of the day. Perplexing himself with endless conjectures, in spite of his resolutions to the contrary, Allan returned at the expiration of his short holiday to London, benefited in health by his little excursion, but completely

mystified in mind by the inexplicable scenes of which he had been a witness.

"Delighted am I to see you with a less pallid cheek," cried Isola when he called upon her; "and as these fresh-water voyages evidently agree with you, I hope you will repeat them. You come most *à propos*. I have made an engagement for you to-night. You know something, I believe, of Sir Gregory Cavendish, who lives in the neighbourhood of Woodcote, and who occupies the mansion in Belgrave Square, which his friends have entitled, from the gorgeousness of its furniture, 'Gilt Gingerbread House.' Well, he gives a vocal and instrumental concert to-night, to which he has invited half the aristocracy of London."

"Surely they will not visit such a purse-proud vulgarian as Sir Gregory, whose wealth is known to have been acquired by very disreputable means?"

"No wonder you think so, Camillo, for your pure heart makes you simple-minded; but you are mistaken, and, foreigner as I am, I can enlighten your ignorance. When

a rich *parvenu* from the City or elsewhere wishes to force himself into fashionable society, and finds that he cannot succeed, even by giving fine dinners in a fine house of some fine square, he avails himself of the rage for music, engages Opera-singers and first-rate instrumentalists, secures perhaps a new lion or lioness from the Continent, announces a grand concert, makes it worth the while of some needy dowager or titled chaperone to fill his rooms, gives her whole packs of blank invitation-cards for the purpose, willingly consenting to her insulting stipulation that his own personal friends must not expect to be asked, and has the pleasure of reading in the papers a long list of the nobility and the *élite* of the fashionable world who honoured him by their company.

"But why should they go, even when the invitation comes filtered through the hands of one of their own order?"

"In the first place, they lay the flattering unction to their souls that they go to hear the concert, not to visit the giver; and, in

the second place, I should like to know where people will *not* go, when they can be admitted gratis to an exhibition of any sort. Yes, believe me, Camillo, you have been termed the *nation boutiquière* more truly than you care to admit, for even your highest ranks will sometimes betray a huckstering spirit, and are seldom better pleased than when they feel that they are driving a good bargain, by obtaining something worth having—for nothing."

"They may certainly plead the something worth having when they can listen to you."

"Look again at your fancy fairs and charity bazaars. Urgent as may be the necessity, dire the distress, unquestionable the claims of the objects for whom you plead, your appeals, simply resting upon the duty of benevolence, will only extort half-crowns and half-sovereigns, even from the habitually bountiful, of whom there is no lack in this country; but hold out to them something that resembles a bargain, tender them a *quid pro quo*, even though it be trash, rubbish, trumpery,—and the charity-

mart shall be thronged with eager higglers, while the money shall be profusely showered down in fifties and hundreds of pounds, to whatever purpose it may be applied."

"It has indeed very much the appearance of selling charity, and making benevolence a question of barter and exchange. But to return to Sir Gregory—how came I to be invited to perform at his concert?"

"You saw Mr. Rosenhagen at my party the other night?"

"Which was he?"

"A shortish, stout, dark, rather consequential man, with a young wig and old whiskers, a gaudy waistcoat, a ponderous gold chain, and so fine a brilliant on his little finger, that he is obliged to be always taking snuff in order to display it."

"I think I recollect such a person: what is he?"

"A sort of *gran Maestro di Cappella* to the fashionable band of musical amateurs, as well as to the unfashionables, who, in order to be in the vogue, set up for *fanatici per la musica*. Both classes contain many

pretenders glad to veil their own ignorance of the art by consulting a sort of broker, better informed than themselves; and Rosenhagen is the man whom they universally employ to supply and superintend their concerts, although, *entre nous*, I look upon him as little better than a smatterer. He knows, however, how to manage the English—calls himself a German, though he was born in London—talks loud in order to create a sensation—affects a certain air of swaggering *haut ton*—makes it a great favour to render his services—engages the performers on his own terms—charges a round sum to the wealthy concert-giver—and takes very good care not to lose anything by the bargain. Then, again, when he is in a condescending humour, he is prevailed upon to select a piano or harp, to the great delight of simple mammas and daughters, who pay him with empty praise, but not to the exclusion of his solid pudding, which he digests in the shape of a twenty or forty pound *douceur* from the vender of the instrument."

"But could he succeed to this extent unless he were a man of real abilities?"

"Yes: real talent retires; pretension puts itself forward in order to astonish fools, and is sure of a large audience."

"He must find this a thriving trade."

"Judge for yourself. Poor and obscure a few years ago, he has now superb apartments in the Albany, gives costly dinners, drives a handsome Brougham, belongs to an expensive club, plays high, and is seen everywhere;—and thus have I given you in a few words the history of Mr. Rosenhagen."

"But you have still omitted to state how he came to bespeak my services."

"Thinking you might as well pocket a few guineas to defray the expenses of your trip, I refused to sing unless you were engaged."

"How very considerate of you! but I don't quite like the thought of being forced upon him."

"You are ever proud, Camillo, but you go as my friend: there is nothing humiliating in that, I hope. Now listen. I have told

you how Sir Gregory and his family are trying to force themselves into the circles of upper life, but I have not explained to you why this particular concert is given. Know, then, that Algernon Cavendish, pretending to be desperately smitten with my charms, has been paying me all sorts of fulsome compliments, assumes to be my *cavaliére servente* wherever I go, and has actually presumed to profane my ears with the word love!—Love! The blaspheming wretch!" exclaimed Isola, her eyes flashing, her face reddening, and her whole frame becoming dilated with anger; "how dare he desecrate that high and holy word by applying it to me, whom he only seeks to degrade by his unhallowed passion?"

"The audacious puppy! And you are going, nevertheless, to his house!"

"Yes, Camillo, for the sum I shall receive will be a step towards Italy. He affects to patronise me—I am too covetous to quarrel with him, every way despicable as he is; and as to his impertinent advances, I only treat them with contemptuous laughter,

as an idle flirtation unworthy any other or more serious notice."

"You must have great forbearance."

"Not so much as you imagine. Let me once more assure you that as I shall ever maintain my self-respect, I will not deserve to lose the respect of others. For my own purposes, I may make fools of the vicious, but never will I forfeit the good opinion of the virtuous."

To the great surprise of Allan, the magnificent rooms of Sir Gregory were crowded with high-sounding titles, diamonds glittered and plumes waved in all directions; it was truly a brilliant assemblage. As usual, the instrumental music, fine as it was, only afforded a convenient cover for the conversation, which had previously languished, but now threatened to drown the tones of the performers. Even the appearance of Isola, the great attraction of the night, did not completely silence that large portion of English auditors who prefer the sound of their own voice to every other upon earth; and when she again came forward to sing the aria of

Di tanti palpiti from the Tancredi, the interruptions and noises became so intolerable that she stopped short, soon after she had begun, while, with an arch smile, and in a voice of the most winning suavity, she thus addressed the company—"Ladies and Gentlemen! I came here entirely for your gratification, and I am sure, therefore, that you must be pleased at my leaving off in the middle of the aria; for unless I had done so, it would have been quite impossible for the other performances to go on. There are several ladies and gentlemen so busily engaged in conversation, and evidently upon such important subjects, that I really think you are bound to listen to them, and I must also entreat a patient hearing for this incessant flirting of fans, and the loud rattling of spoons upon the ice plates—harmonious accompaniments, which my singing, I fear, would only tend to interrupt."

The words "saucy!—insolent!—impertinent!" were muttered in several quarters; but the cries of "Brava! Brava!" uttered the most vociferously by those who had pre-

viously been the most noisy, drowned every other. Miss Cavendish, apologising for the rudeness of her visitants, entreated the offended songstress to resume.—Isola again came forward, amid the profound silence of the whole assemblage, and sang so exquisitely that she was greeted with a rapturous *encore*, a call with which she readily and courteously complied, contriving to exceed even herself in the repetition of the air.

"I told you," said Isola, when talking over the occurrence on the following morning with Allan—"that I was by no means so forbearing as you imagined, but I should not have ventured on so decided a step unless I had been more than usually annoyed by the interruptions of which I complained. Besides, I really wished to give a lesson to the offending parties, a rebuke which I find too much needed in most of the London music meetings, for I cannot tamely submit to a rudeness from the highest English society, to which I have never been exposed in the very humblest assemblages of the Continent."

"I admire your spirit, but I was afraid at first that it might have been taken in dudgeon."

"No; depend upon it, the only way to treat these offenders against the courtesies of society, is to bully them. Show that you don't care for them, and they will care for you; and the higher their class the more easily can you thus control them. Did I not tell you how Rosenhagen succeeded by affecting hauteur, and making it a great favour to ease people of their money? *Apropos* to the mention of that worthy, did you notice last night a tall thin elderly man in spectacles, who condescended to address me for some time, though he still held the Duke of Keswick by the button?"

"A loud-talking person with free and easy manners?"

"The same. Well, that is Monsieur or Mister Preville, a complete *pendant* in the world of pictures to Rosenhagen in the sphere of music. When a *nouveau riche* or an old *millionaire* wishes to form a Gallery, or to cover the walls of his dining-room with

chefs-d'œuvres of the old masters (moderns are exploded, *their* works would not admit of thimble-rig substitutions, so he professes to hold them all in utter contempt), there is but one man in London to whom they can betake themselves, and that man is Preville, whose fiat, as to the authenticity of a Rafaelle, a Claude, a Rubens, or a Paul Veronese, is absolute and decisive. One of your burlettas says:—

'Jove in his chair, of the sky Lord Mayor.
When he nods men and Gods
Keeps in awe———'

Well, this Jupiter of the connoisseurs, this pictorial Pope, is equally despotic and infallible, and when he pronounces a decree it would be deemed little less than sacrilege to doubt it."

"And, like other Popes and Jupiters, I suppose he expects offerings to be laid upon his altar."

"Only accepting them, however, as a prodigious favour! Making yearly excursions to the Continent, he picks up good copies of the old masters; contrives to discover the

half-obliterated name of the true painter in some dark corner; or, without employing any artifice whatever, pronounces it at once a valuable original; and after much solicitation and competition, is prevailed upon to sell it for as many thousands as it cost him hundreds."

"A thriving trade."

"Ay, and thrivingly attested by a handsome house in May Fair, crammed with valuable originals of course,—a handsome equipage, and admission to the tables of all the rich and titled collectors in London, by whom the free and easy manners which you noticed, are attributed to the natural confidence of an enlightened and unmistakeable judgment."

"And who was the little red-nosed doctor to whom you introduced me after my solo?"

"That was Dr. Crispen, better known by his nickname of Doctor Caoutchouc, the celebrated rubber, who cures all human complaints by manipulation, assisted by some panacean embrocation of his own discovery —and who may be now termed the fashionable quack *par excellence*, although it is

said that he was an obscure shoemaker only a few years ago, and that it would be difficult to find the register of his diploma. Luxurious London, with its million and a half of inhabitants, will always contain a certain number of real or imaginary invalids, who, having vainly exhausted the art of the regular practitioner, snatch at empirics and charlatans, as drowning men at straws. Prince Hohenlohe has ceased to work miraculous cures—people no longer read with their stomachs, see with their backs, and are thrown into ecstatic fits, or death-like sleeps, under the metallic tractor of the magnetist. St. John Long's counter-irritation nostrum sleeps in the grave of its inventor—Homœopathy is itself becoming infinitesimal—and up starts Dr. Crispen to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to by friction and embrocations; a remedy which, after all, is but a plagiarism from Mahomed's shampooing."

"Is it not strange that ignorant pretenders should be able to enrich themselves by such palpable absurdities?"

"Not at all, if you consider the great

wealth of London, recollecting also that their presumptuous promises of cure operate upon the two strongest of our passions—hope and fear; and that of all fools, a rich sick fool is the most easily gullible."

"Which may explain why our nation affords the best harvest for such impostors."

"It would seem as if you required mountebanks for the soul as well as the body, if we may judge by the success of Johanna Southcote, and the more recent delusion of Irvine and his unknown tongues. These have had their day, and I really know not what the good people of England would have done for spiritual excitement, had not the Oxford Tracts sprung up at the very moment when a new nostrum was most wanted. La Fayette's cure for all the political ills of France was republicanism with a king. Your Oxford doctors, cutting off the head and crown which he added, prescribe as a remedy for all the spiritual complaints of England—popery without a pope."

"How have you managed during your

short residence in London to obtain such an insight into its leading characters?"

"They obtrude themselves upon my attention, to the exclusion, probably, of parties much better worth knowing. I am naturally inquisitive, and Harry Freeman, who is acquainted with everybody and everything, has, in his rattling yet clever and intelligent way, completely placed me *au courant du jour* as to the notabilities. He calls Rosenhagen, Preville, and Dr. Crispen, the three grand humbugs of London."

"It might be well if some of their dupes and victims could see the portraits you have drawn of those worthies."

"It would not disabuse them. There are other brainless fanatics besides the worshippers of Juggernaut, who prefer an ugly deity, and who even think it a merit to be maimed or killed, provided they can contribute to the support of his carriage. And now, Camillo, since I am in an admonitory and didactic vein—a rare occurrence—I must condemn another custom in your upper classes, which, to give you

a perfectly new quotation, would be 'more honoured in the breach than the observance.' I allude to a practice which I would call superannuated flirtation, effete coquetry, greybeard gallantry, amusing itself in its second childhood by conjuring up the ghost of its departed profligacy: a pastime which, if it means nothing, is ridiculous; and if it means anything, is abandoned as well as contemptible. In dining at Sir Gregory's I remarked, as I have done elsewhere, that there was a pointed and significant care to place Lord Crutchly next to Lady Totterton, Sir Adam Winterly next to Lady Sarah Oldham, and Mr. Ogle by the side of Mrs. Wrinklesworth, an arrangement to the necessity of which a bantering allusion was frequently made by the rest of the company; while the parties themselves, most of whom were sexagenarians at least, received their innuendoes with a smirk of affected consciousness, as if they were so many young couples engaged in courtship."

"Sweethearts with one leg in the grave! Probably their friends only encourage them for their own amusement."

"If most of them, as I believe, have their hearts in the grave as well as one leg, how shall we account for this posthumous billing and cooing? Hamlet says to his mother, 'Assume a virtue, if you have it not;' but these grandmothers and grandfathers prefer the assumption of a vice which they have not, and are hypocrites on the side of evil. Making a merit of having deserted their sins, when their sins had deserted them, people in former days, after they had passed their grand climacteric, used to illustrate the dictum, that a youth of folly 's an old age of cards; or, turning saints when they could no longer be sinners, would devoutly give to God the devil's leavings: but the offenders to whom I allude, after having worn out their bodies, seem to find a corrupt pleasure in becoming speculative, when they cease to be practical libertines."

"If they can find a forlorn pleasure in thus looking back, no wonder that they are afraid to look forwards."

"Ay, and if these were friendships instead of flirtations, if the parties were attracted towards each other by intellectual sympathy,

by fellowship of age, or by a congeniality—but hist! here comes the visitant I expected—I know his conceited rap, for he cannot even knock at a door unaffectedly: for once he is punctual to his hour. Step into the next room: he calls upon me by appointment, but I will not suffer him to detain me long." Allan withdrew into the inner apartment, the door of which, receding from the lock, after he had imagined it closed, compelled him to become an unintentional auditor of what passed between Isola and her visitant, whose drawling fantastical voice immediately proclaimed him to be Algernon Cavendish. At first he had thought of softly closing the intervening door, but having now determined, for the heart is a quicker casuist than the head, that such a proceeding might draw attention and, perhaps, excite suspicion, he resolved to sit quiet and leave matters as they were.

The recollection that Sir Gregory's dandy son had professed an unbounded admiration of the fair Italian, not only quickened his pulsation, but his ears; and although he

scorned in general the character of a listener, he could not refrain from paying an eager attention to the discourse within. After many hyperbolical compliments upon her singing on the previous night, and as much fulsome flattery upon her personal appearance, the visitant expressed his fear that the remuneration made to her by Mr. Rosenhagen would prove inadequate to her just claims, and requested her acceptance of a pocket-book, with which he had taken the liberty of providing himself. "As I came to England," was the reply, "for the purpose of selling my vocal powers, such as they are, I willingly receive whatever they may bring me. You have my thanks, Sir, which is all I have to offer."

Her companion next inquired whether she did not contemplate an immediate excursion to Canterbury, that she might sing for some public charity; and having received an answer in the affirmative, he launched out into fresh encomiums upon her surpassing beauty and transcendent talents, professed himself completely captivated by

her varied charms, and wound up his effusion by saying that if she would allow him the supreme happiness of accompanying her in her excursion, an arrangement which might be made without exciting the least scandal, he would willingly place at her disposal ten times the contents of the pocket-book she had just done him the honour to accept.

At this audacious proposal Allan, reddening with rage, could hardly restrain his indignation; but he compelled himself to remain quiet, eagerly awaiting the burst of fury, or the withering scorn, with which Isola would overwhelm her insulter. What was his astounding bewilderment when, after a pause of breathless suspense, he heard her exclaim in a tone of gaiety, "Well! it is not a bad idea, I protest, considering that it is yours. As I shall travel by night, I shall want a guard, and if you positively insist upon being my companion, I don't know how I am to prevent you. My time is precious,—I shall have a carriage at the door at eleven o'clock to-morrow night, and

you may call at ten minutes before that hour. There, there, no protestations,—no ecstasies—the affair is settled; and you must leave me now, that I may make arrangements for my departure." Surprised and rejoiced until he even forgot his habitual drawling, the dandy protested that he had been made the happiest man in existence; declared that her favours would ever command his unbounded gratitude; hoped that their alliance would be continued so long as she remained in England; promised to be punctual to the appointment, and finally took his departure. Allan, in the meanwhile, stupified by what he had just heard, still retained his seat, with his hands clasped and his eyes fixed on the carpet, when Isola entered, sharply exclaiming, "How is this? —Has the door been left ajar? Then you have overheard everything that passed. Are you not ashamed of yourself thus to pry into my secrets?" Allan would have explained the circumstances that had rendered him an unintentional auditor, but such was his confusion of mind, that he

hesitated, stammered, and was again beginning, when the changeful Italian burst into such a fit of uncontrollable laughter, that she was obliged to throw herself into a chair until it had somewhat subsided; after which she continued, "I see it all—I understand it all—your reddened face, and stern expression, and transfixed attitude have revealed to me the whole truth:—you are horrified, dumbfoundered at what you have heard."

"That I am bewildered—that I can hardly trust the evidence of my ears, I must really confess."

"Trust then to me, and distrust your senses, if you do not mean to give me serious cause of displeasure. *You* offended with *me!* Our feelings ought to be reversed; but I will not punish you as you deserve. You have heard my appointment with Mr. Cavendish—it is for to-morrow night—I will now make an appointment with *you*,—come to me at the same hour. I will invite a dozen more—it was a sudden thought, but I think it will amuse us all. *En*

attendant, I must wish you good morning; for, as I told Mr. Cavendish, I must make arrangements for my journey: and so, most worthy knight of the rueful visage, *addio!*" With these words she waltzed out of the room, and was heard alternately singing and laughing as she mounted the stairs.

CHAPTER III.

Although the bodily health of the poor lunatic at the Manor-House was now completely re-established, while the quiet regular life she led, combined with the kind and tender treatment she experienced, had restored the tone of her mind to an almost uniform composure; she had made no discernible progress towards the recovery of her reason. It has been mentioned that she was supplied with a guitar, upon which she would occasionally play snatches of tunes and sing fragments of songs, sometimes disconnected and unmeaning, yet always seeming to produce a soothing influence upon her feelings. At the suggestion of Mrs. Latimer, who had more than once observed her moving her fingers, as if striking the

keys of an instrument, the kind-hearted Mr. Brown ordered a piano to be placed in her sitting-room, at which she immediately seated herself, without betraying the least emotion at its unexpected appearance, ran over the keys with the rapid touch of a proficient, and began to warble an Italian air of exquisite tenderness, suddenly breaking into a different strain, which must have awakened some affecting reminiscence, for she ceased and sank into a deep reverie, while the tears fell slowly upon the clasped white hands that rested on her knee. But these transitions would occasionally assume a more cheerful character.—

"With wildest pathos would she pour awhile
Some plaintive ballad; then, with vacant smile,
Break into merriment, and carol free
Some childish chant with more than childish glee."

Judging, from her skill in one accomplishment, that she must have been instructed in others, the gentle and considerate Walter, who had taken the deepest interest in her welfare, deposited in her apartment his own drawing and painting materials, observing, with no

small gratification, that she derived a manifest pleasure from the new amusement thus supplied to her. Alas! if it afforded fresh evidences of her skill, it gave also new proofs of her continued derangement, for she would devote a whole morning to the elaborate painting of a flower or landscape;—

> "Then with fantastic scrawl o'erdaub the whole,
> Enjoy the freak, and laugh without control;
> That laugh appalling, where the features flare
> With joy in which the reason owns no share."

The recreation, however, which seemed to exercise the most beneficial influence upon her feelings was a stroll in the fields with Fanny Chubbs, whose unremitting attentions and amiable disposition had conciliated her entire regard. Upon these occasions the rustics of the neighbourhood, whose compassion was not unmingled with a degree of superstitious awe, arising from her dementated state, and the mystery attached to her, would cease their labours, while they imparted to each other, in deep and earnest whispers, their several theories as to her secret history and the cause of her malady.

Even the children, as she approached, discontinued their games, hushed their cries, drew reverently aside, put their forefingers in their mouths, and only stole a furtive glance at her as she passed, gazing intently at her, but in an awe-struck silence, until she was out of sight or hearing, when their evanescent pity was succeeded by a joyous renewal of their pastimes.

Upon Fanny herself her total change of life had been attended with the most salutary effects, both as to health and spirits. Not only had she escaped from a home rendered daily more uncomfortable by her father's increasing intemperance, but the constant sight of a female and a lady still more unhappy than herself had tended to withdraw her thoughts from brooding over her own griefs, and had reconciled her in some degree to her lot—circumstances which might well explain her improved appearance, though Mrs. Glossop attributed it exclusively to the renovating posset which she very kindly concocted and administered with her own Esculapian hands. Many as were the pretty

walks in the neighbourhood, it did so happen that Fanny gave a decided preference to one leading to a gentle eminence, whence she could obtain a view of old Groombridge's mill. Here would she sit, though it was rather a sunny and exposed spot, riveting her eyes to the whirling vans, wondering where Harry was, and how he was occupied at that very moment, from which vain conjectures her thoughts would revert to the pleasant hours she had passed in working the two hearts and the true lovers' knots on the shoulders of his smock-frock.

An occurrence took place at this juncture which for a short time disturbed the equanimity of "the poor mad lady." A family newly settled in the neighbourhood having called at the Manor-House, Brown, first relating to them the adventure of farmer Chubbs and the mysterious monk, produced the watch which had been found in the cart, leaving it on the table after their departure. He had not long returned to the sitting-room when his fair inmate entered, and walked round the apartment, plucking the

forefinger of one hand with the finger and thumb of the other, a habit she had acquired, while she whispered inarticulately to herself. As she was thus occupied, her eye fell upon the watch, when she uttered a loud cry, ran eagerly forward to the table, snatched it up, touched a secret spring which had hitherto remained undetected, imprinted the most eager kisses upon a miniature revealed within the case, and then pressed it to her bosom with an impassioned fondness which terminated in a burst of tears.

"Poor thing! poor thing! what's the matter now?" cried the merchant, as, hastening to the table and looking over her shoulder, he beheld in the miniature an exquisitely finished portrait of a clergyman in his robes. "Shouldn't wonder if it was her husband—must be—very wrong, if it isn't, to kiss a person in that way. Wonder whether he's alive—there she goes again pressing him to her heart. Odsbobs! a lucky dog that fellow in his canonicals. The sight of him seems quite to have overcome her—she looks as if she would fall

from her chair;—here, Fanny, run for the pommade divine — I mean the Rowland's Kalydor;—what the deuce is it that you give to women when they're fainting away?"

"Oh dear, dear!" exclaimed Fanny, "it seems to be worse than that; I fear she is going into violent hysterics. What *shall* I do?"

"Why, prevent them, to be sure, silly girl! and not stand staring at her like a stuck pig. What did I hire you for? Why don't you open the window, shut the door, stir the fire, run for a fan, rub her hands?"

"But if she should go into raging hysterics, I shall be frightened out of my seven senses—I am sure I shall."

"Zooks!" exclaimed the merchant, getting red in the face, in the anticipation of some delirious burst, "I never saw a woman in violent hysterics—what do they do?—kick—bite—scratch—jump over your head like a mad cat—throw you out of window—split your skull with the poker? Oh, here comes Trotman—that's lucky—he's never at a loss.—Hallo, you scoundrel! what are you

running away for, the moment you enter the room? Gone! Was there ever such a pitiful, cowardly, sneaking, useless fellow!"

"La, Sir! he's not used to ladies, and faintings, and fits."

"Then he's not fit for my service, and I'll give him warning this very——" The completion of the sentence was prevented by the hasty return of Trotman with a tumbler of water, into which he poured some sal-volatile from a phial, and held it to the lips of the patient, who gulped down a portion of the mixture, by which she appeared to be considerably revived, for after two or three sobs she drew herself up in the chair, and acknowledged the timely succour she had received by a gentle inclination of the head.

"Was that what you ran for, John?" asked Brown; to which receiving a silent nod in reply, he continued;—"Then *I* was a scoundrel (and a jackass besides) for calling *you* one, that's all." John made a very respectful acquiescent bow, and ejaculated the single word, "Glossop."

"Ay, ay, there's a good fellow! do send Mrs. Glossop immediately." Trotman was again out of the room almost before the words were out of his master's mouth, and in a few minutes the housekeeper bustled into the apartment, adjusting her disordered head-dress as she exclaimed, "Never had such a stunning blow! John running, calling me, one way, and I running the other; when just as I turned the corner by the pantry, our two heads came smack together, *dos à dos*, as the French say, and I really thought at first that I was *dégagé* for life. *Mon Doo!* what's the matter with the lady? *Pauvre garson!* how ill she looks! What has happened to her?"

"Poor thing! she has been overcome by kissing a parson, that's all."

"La, Sir, how can you talk so? I'm sure she's too innocent a creature to be guilty of such a downright *mauvaise honte*."

"Master means the picture," said Fanny, pointing to the miniature, and anxious to exculpate her patient.

"Oh, if it's only a painted one, I don't see

any great harm in it; that's quite a different *tout autre chose*—but *ma foi!* it's in the case of the monk's watch, I do declare—only to think! and we can't find out the *je ne sai quoi* of it—well, that makes the whole affair a more puzzling *eclaircissmong* than it was before, and we shall never—but see, Fanny! she points to the door; she wants to *allez vous ong* to her own apartment—take her other arm, and I'll support on this side. There! there! *mon cher petit maitre*—lean upon me, you'll soon be better, you'll soon be in a rabid state again."

Although repeatedly solicited by questions and signs as to the original of the miniature, the silence of the lunatic remained unbroken except by a few incoherent phrases; but she exhibited such a marked disinclination to part with it, that she was allowed to retain the watch, and she would sit for hours gazing intently upon it, and mumbling to herself as if conjuring up reminiscences of past days. Quiet and absorbed as she seemed to be at first while indulging these reveries, they must have awakened some

irritating association, for she now occasionally relapsed into moods of ungovernable excitement, during the prevalence of which they were obliged to place her under restraint, while the whole household were kept in perpetual alarm from the uncertainty as to these recurring accesses of delirium, and the mischief to which they might lead.

Under these circumstances the merchant, yielding to the advice of his friends and neighbours, and actuated more by a desire to promote her recovery than to get rid of his inmate, however distressing might be her domiciliation in the Manor-House, placed her under the care of a physician at a distance of twenty miles, who received three or four insane patients, and had acquired a merited renown for his success in curing them. His terms were very high, but to these Brown made not the slightest objection, generously declaring that he should adopt the poor lady who had been thus accidentally thrown upon his protection, and maintain her as long as she lived, should they not succeed in discovering her friends. Not

without much regret did he part from her, for her beauty, her misfortune, her lady-like appearance, and winning suavity of manner, when not under morbid excitement, had won his attachment as deeply as her affliction had excited his commiseration. He declared his intention of paying her frequent visits, and desired that she might be occasionally driven over to the Manor-House, when her malady would permit her taking such an excursion.

Captain Molloy had recently come into the unexplained possession of money, evidenced by an ostentatious display of small bank notes; a species of glorification which must have been gratifying to himself from the same cause that made it startling to others—its unprecedented novelty. Little reason as we have afforded for respecting either his principles or his conduct, it grieves us to state the means to which he had stooped for relieving himself from his long-standing complaint of impecuniosity. Conceiving that his grandson Valentine, the young imp of mischief, who had hitherto

been the plague of his life, might by a little tuition be made to minister to its support, he gave him secret instructions in the game of whist, and taught him a system of signs whereby his pupil, with the aid of a few simple and natural movements and sounds, could telegraph the court-cards and the number of trumps in any hand that he might overlook. Repeated experiments having tested the boy's proficiency in this hopeful accomplishment, the Captain made a visit with his family to Cheltenham, taking up his residence in a boarding-house notorious for the high play of its inmates, and which possessed also the additional recommendation of numbering among its residents the identical Nabob with whom Matilda had flirted upon a former occasion, and whom she was now determined to entrap. No wonder that the father, assisted by such trickery, played his cards much better than his daughter. Everything answered to his wish. Valentine, as quick as he was mischievous, enacted his part to admiration, running in and out of the card-room as if in mere frolic, pretending to

quarrel with his grandfather for always playing at those stupid cards, and being angrily desired in reply to quit the room and cease his importunities if he wished to avoid chastisement. In addition to the stakes, the Captain made bets; it is almost needless to add that he generally won; the pittance of his gains, which was bestowed upon his young confederate, was wasted in pastry, fireworks, and gallopings upon hired horses; and of the remainder a portion was devoted by the winner to the better equipment of his daughters, of whom, in the midst of all his failings, he was both fond and proud. Hence the flaming pelisse of Matilda, which was destined to aid her other wiles and allurements in dazzling the senses of the Nabob, a bilious, elderly, inquisitive little gentleman, who was famous in Cheltenham for his interrogative flirtations with pretty girls, and for asking them every question in the world except *the* question.

Valentine, too knowing not to see and take advantage of his position, soon insisted upon a larger share of the spoil, under a

threat of disclosing their plot; and when he had extorted what he demanded, lavished it in precocious riot and folly. Young as he was, he had been more than once brought home intoxicated, to the infinite alarm of his confederate, who naturally dreaded the disclosures that might escape from him in this state: nor were his sober moods much less perilous, for in the confidence of impunity, so far as his grandfather was concerned, his freaks, outrages, and audacity became every day more intolerable. Urged by these considerations, as well as by the departure of the principal whist-players from the boarding-house, Molloy returned home, to the grievous mortification of Matilda, all whose machinations and manœuvres, aided by dress, undress, and address, had failed to secure the wily, unhookable Nabob.

Though it might be said of the Captain, as of many other Irishmen, that money burnt in his pockets, they had latterly suffered no combustion, from the total want of pecuniary fuel. There were creditors enough who would have been glad to prevent any

accident of this nature, had they known the comparative plenitude of his purse; but theirs were the very last claims that he thought of satisfying. No;—though he might not have gotten his present winnings like a gentleman, he was determined to spend them like one; so he resolved to give a handsome dinner to his friends and neighbours, to be succeeded by a match of pigeon-shooting, for which he had already made arrangements, calculating that if he could get up a game of whist afterwards, with Valentine for his telegraph, he might repay himself the whole expense. Besides, now that Algernon Cavendish had quitted the field, his scheming thoughts reverted to Walter and his daughter Ellen, in favour of whom he was most anxious to conciliate the wealthy and childless Adam Brown, an object which he deemed most likely to be attained by the display of his own hospitality and improved circumstances.

The pigeon-match was to take place at a farm-house called the Grange, situated at about three miles distance from Woodcote,

in the direction of Charlton Abbots, and the parties concerned were to meet at Captain Molloy's. Some of those who were to participate in the *sport* (as it is strangely called) were already assembled, provided with their fowling-pieces, shot-belts, and powder-flasks. These were presently joined by Brown, who, though no sportsman, was glad of an excuse for a long walk and a morning's amusement; and by Dawson, the apothecary, whose far-reaching thoughts suggesting the possibility of friends shooting one another instead of the birds, by no means an unusual result, whispered to him that he was imperatively bound, as a good Christian in bad circumstances, to be in readiness for any such deplorable calamity and profitable job. Mr. Dawson, moreover, was a humane man; and when he reflected that two of the party, recently settled in the neighbourhood, had large young families, all subject, of course, to the measles and hooping-cough, to say nothing of scarlatina, he felt that he ought not to lose an opportunity of making an acquaintance which

might eventually enable him to render very material service to those innocent and interesting sufferers *in futuro.*

"The last time I went to a match of pigeon-shooting," cried Molloy, making his rattan perform the sword exercise with such slashing animation that his companions kept at a prudent distance, "I remember I rode to the place of meeting on my famous hunter Paddy-whack. There was the Marquis of Mayo, Lord Popham, Sir Charles Bangor, Walter Butler—no, Walter wasn't there—it was Sir William Wingham, and myself; and *by* the powers! I never shot so well in all my life. Killed every bird but one, and he was knocked all to pieces. Beat all my competitors hollow, and yet the others had double-barrelled guns, while I had nothing in the world to shoot with but——"

"The long bow," interposed Crab, "was once considered the best weapon to shoot with. The ancient ones were of a single piece; the modern long bows have a thin piece of ash joined to them: but perhaps I interrupt you,—pray go on."

"I was only about to add that mine was a single-barrel—and a famous cold I caught that same day, by shooting without my hat; but I'm always catching cold in my head."

"His own fault,—he's always going out without anything in it," whispered Crab to Brown.

"And that same day," pursued Molloy, "I made a party with General Hooker to go fishing in the river Newry;—by the bye, Crab, what was the weight of that fine jack you caught last week in Langholme water?"

"Twelve pounds."

"By the powers! is that all? The very last jack I caught in the river Newry weighed twenty-four pounds."

"Hang it!" muttered Crab, aside; "I wish I could catch my jack again, I would double the Captain's weight instantly, and make him a forty-eight pounder."

"As for the poor General, he would hardly have hooked a fish, if I hadn't been at his elbow abetting and aiding."

"Rodomont-*ading* and gascon-*ading*,"

said Crab, patting the tops of his fingers, and looking up to the sky, as if lost in an etymological reverie, "are derived, I think, from the boastful hero of Ariosto, and the braggadocio character of the Gascon French."

"I brought the General home with me to Clognakilty House," pursued Molloy: "there was a party of six of us at dinner, and each of us drank five bottles of claret to his own cheek."

"That's more than I can swallow," observed Crab very quietly.

"And yet I was as sober as a judge,—must have been, for I won twenty pounds afterwards at cards, though I'm no great hand at whist."

"If you had played at brag, you must have won forty at the very least; it's a *very* gambling game."

With such adroitness did the Captain's assailant manage these sidewind attacks, either by dropping his voice, or by dealing in equivoques which might bear no offensive construction, that, without provoking their object, they afforded infinite amusement to

the rest of the party, who prosecuted their walk with much good humour, until they arrived at the Grange, when, on preparing to load their pieces, it was found that every one of the powder-flasks had been completely emptied of its contents. At this discovery a look of blank bewilderment sat upon the features of the whole party; each stood staring at the other in silent amazement, utterly unable to account for the phenomenon, until a shriek of elf-like laughter from the neighbouring thicket, followed by a shrill cry of "Crikey! *what* fun!" betrayed at once the author of the mischief.

Looking forward to the importance of Valentine's assistance at the after-dinner whist-table, Molloy, irritated as he was, prudently held his peace; but one of the party, a pompous, pragmatical Major Starchley, being by no means disposed to submit patiently to the insult, angrily exclaimed, "So, Captain Molloy! this is another prank, I find, of your hopeful grandson. I recollect now that when we took off our belts and powder-flasks he carried them all out of

the room: but I'll have one sport if I can't have another. I'll beat the little rascal to a mummy—a jelly—a nothing!" So saying he snatched up Brown's cane, and set off in the direction of the thicket, although Molloy bawled after him, "Lord love you, Major, you may as well try to catch the wind, or a Will-o'-the-wisp, for the young dog is here and there and everywhere, and all at the same time." This averment was soon confirmed, for the Major presently returned from his vain pursuit, endeavouring to look particularly calm, though he was half frantic with rage, and protesting that he felt as cool as a cucumber, though he was covered with perspiration. After a considerable delay a fresh supply of gunpowder was procured, when the party completed their match and walked back to Woodcote, all professing most unmerciful intentions towards the Captain's dinner, for which their exertions had given them an unusual appetite, and all carrying their threats into full execution. After the demolition of the viands, the guests proceeded

to the discussion of the wine, which the host decanted with his own experienced hands, declaring that he had had it for many years in his cellar, and that it ought to be good, since he had paid a long price for it. Of this assertion, strange to say, the latter half was true, for the landlord of the Green Man, from whom he had procured it only the day before, refused to supply him until he had paid off an old score of considerable standing. That Valentine, after such an irremissible offence, remained *perdu*, it is scarcely necessary to state; notwithstanding which the Captain got up a game of cards, and contrived to be a winner, detaining his friends at the whist-table until it was time to take their departure, when they were still longer delayed by the violence of a heat-engendered storm, which vented itself in a heavy rain. This soon ceased, but as the unusual darkness of the night threatened its quick recurrence, the whole party assembled on the green in front of the cottage, to debate as to the mode of reaching their respective homes, for Brown had not ordered his carriage, in-

tending to walk back with his friend Crab —a resolution which he now petulantly regretted.

"Ah! if this had happened in London now—only got to bawl out 'coach,' and a dozen hacks run over you in a minute, splashing all your friends with kennel-water. No such luxuries or comforts in the country—must trudge afoot if it rains pitch-forks and red-hot pokers—chance of being knocked down by the bludgeon of a rustic highwayman—if not, ten to one you tumble into a ditch, where you pass the night, with a dead dog or a litter of kittens for your pillow." This tirade was suddenly interrupted by the sharp snapping report of a cracker, which bounced, and exploded, and performed the most fantastic evolutions around Crab, whom it baited and tormented although he jumped in various directions to avoid it, exhibiting, as he did so, such a ludicrous mixture of alarm and alacrity, that the merchant burst into a fit of irresistible laughter. His merriment was sobered, after the lapse of a minute, by a

mysterious hissing noise, appearing to proceed from the bottom of his own back, speedily followed by such a continuous shower of sparks upon the calves of his legs, which were only defended by thin stockings, that he began to "wheel about and turn about and jump Jim Crow," with a vivacity that would have done honour to Mr. Rice himself.

"Some more villainy of that accursed young fiend!" he panted out, rubbing his tingling calves when the gunpowder serpent had exhausted its fire. "This is an assault, and I'll have him up before the magistrates to-morrow—no safety for our lives—intolerable—monstrous—atrocious!"

"You really surprise me," said Crab, in a bland voice of wonder, "for just now, when I was cutting capers, though I cannot pretend to compete with you in agility, you seemed to think it a fit subject for laughter."

"Gentlemen," cried the Major, "we must rid the neighbourhood of this pestilent little firebrand, or there will be neither peace nor safety for us. It is lucky that he

has spared me any additional outrage of this nature, for my temper, when once roused, is violent; and I feel that if he had presumed to——" The rest the winds dispersed in empty air, for at that instant a large cracker, bounding from the ground, hit him so sharp a blow on the nose, that he had only time to ejaculate—"The Lord deliver me!" and hasten away with his handkerchief to his face, to prevent the blood from soiling his clothes. His precipitate retreat was the signal for a shriek of elfin laughter, followed by the usual cry, sounding as if only a very few yards distant, for the darkness of the night made its utterer bold.

Scared at a triumphant cachinnation that seemed to be almost preternatural, as it echoed from the surrounding darkness, and apprehensive of some further assault if they remained, the Captain's visitants made the best of their way to their respective homes, uttering maledictions, and vowing vengeance against the young demon by whom the neighbourhood was haunted and infested, although the echoes of his laughter still

followed them, as if in mockery of their menaces. Lucky and opportune was their withdrawal, for Valentine, having the material for a fresh supply of fireworks in the powder he had recently purloined, meant to be exceedingly liberal in the disposal of what he had previously manufactured. By means of a piece of twine and a small fish-hook, he had attached them to the coats of his victims, stealing behind them for the purpose as they stood chatting together outside the cottage, and saving himself from detection by the unusual darkness of the night, combined with his own unparagoned adroitness and audacity.

CHAPTER IV.

Implicit as was Allan Latimer's reliance upon the honour and purity of Isola, and angry as he was with himself if any derogatory thoughts stole for a single moment into his mind, he could not utterly exclude a vague feeling of—what was it—jealousy? —No—of regret, of apprehension, of misgiving, when he recalled the colloquy with Cavendish, which he had so unintentionally overheard. That she should accept the pocket-book and its contents did not surprise him, for it had reference to her vocal exertions at the concert; but that she should suffer him to make his subsequent insulting propositions, that she should even lead him to believe in her concurrence, and treat the affair subsequently with such utter levity,

filled him with amazement, even after making all due allowance for the eccentricity of her character, and her avowed disregard of appearances, so long as she preserved her own respect and merited the respect of others. Short as was the interval before the mystery must be cleared up, he found it difficult to restrain his impatience, and it was with a beating heart, as well as an ardent feeling of curiosity, that he proceeded to the Quadrant rather before the appointed hour on the following night. Isola had talked of asking a dozen people, but there were twice that number in her room, consisting mostly of her titled patrons and patronesses, and including among the former several of those who had professed themselves smitten with her charms, and whose advances she had repelled with ridicule and banter.

Dressed in a style of unusual elegance, but with that attention to strict decorum which some of her fashionable friends had stigmatised as prudish, alternately laughing, rattling, and singing, for she was in a state of the most joyous excitement, Isola put

forth all her powers of fascination, and never perhaps had she exerted them with such an unbounded success. After warbling an impassioned love-strain, or chanting some solemn *preghiera* with a pathos and sublimity that threw her auditors into raptures, she would turn their tears to smiles by a girlish vivacity and bewitching playfulness that were equally irresistible; or she would surprise those who had the capacity to understand her, by some merry conceit, or unexpected remark equally original and profound. All were enchanted, all pressed around her with the warmest expressions of admiration, when she laughingly exclaimed, "Pooh! pooh! this is nothing but flattery —you have heard me to as much advantage, or more, on other occasions—and you all know, as well as I can tell you, that no London party can be brilliant without novelty, without a special lion or lioness,—in consideration of which, and in order, moreover, that I may entitle myself to your eternal gratitude, I have provided for your particular entertainment this night a lion

par excellence—a dandy-lion, a love-making lion—who, like Nick Bottom the weaver, shall aggravate his voice so that he will roar you as gently as any sucking dove."

"Who is it,—who is it? What is it?" inquired a dozen voices at once. "Nay—if I tell you my secret, there's an end of the curiosity which I am glad to see that I have piqued. Only promise to follow my instructions—be noisy when I request you—silent when I bid you—but above all be sure to laugh heartily and unanimously when my lion is let loose from his den, and I warrant he shall afford us some capital sport." To these conditions, prescribed with a mixture of archness and gravity that increased the mystification of her auditors, all gave a ready assent; when Isola reseated herself at the piano, and turned their attention for the moment into another channel by enchaining their ears to the appropriate recitative of "*Ecco il punto,*" from Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito.*

Cavendish in the mean while, punctual to his appointment, dressed out in the very ex-

tremity of the mode, elated beyond measure at the thought of triumphing over the numerous distinguished competitors who had sued in vain for the favours of the inexorable Signora, presented himself at the exact hour agreed upon, unsuspicious of the part he was destined to play in the evening's entertainment. On the street door being opened, old Antonio, who had been tutored for the purpose, and who quite enjoyed his own portion of the plot, informed him that as some particular friends had called, to whom his mistress would not for the world make known the fact of her appointment with Mr. Cavendish, she had directed that he should be shown into a small back room, until she could dismiss her unwelcome visitants, which she would do as quickly as possible. "Anywhere, anywhere," whispered the coxcomb —"but I hope these confawnded bores won't stay long, for I see the cawriage is at the door."

"Follow me, Sir, if you please, and don't let your footsteps be heard," said the Italian, stealthily ascending the stairs, and blowing

out the candle as he entered the back room, while he pronounced a whispered malediction upon the wind, as if it had been done by accident; after which he took the arm of his companion, for they were now in total darkness, led him a few steps forward, and cautioning him to remain perfectly quiet until he was summoned, closed a door upon his prisoner, noiselessly bolted it on the outside, and withdrew to give the preconcerted signal which announced the successful entrapment of their victim. It was recognised by a cough from his mistress, when the old Italian retired, his face crumpled and puckered up, and his whole frame shaking with suppressed laughter and anticipated fun.

In spite of the solicitations of her visitants, who were becoming clamorous for the exhibition of the promised lion, Isola continued some time longer to sing and to launch the most vivacious sallies, enjoying the thoughts of her prisoner's impatience; but at length she began to make arrangements for his liberation. The company being led to the top of the stairs, she bade them good night

in an audible voice, as if they were all retiring, after which they stealthily returned to the drawing-room, where she cautioned them to silence by laying her forefinger upon her laughing lips. The door was now gently opened, and candles were placed upon the tables of the inner room, until it was as brilliantly lighted up as the principal apartment, when she walked round on tiptoe to her guests, reminding them in a whisper of their promise to answer the first roar of the lion with a roar of simultaneous laughter. Satisfied with their preliminary arrangements, she crossed the floor, tapped at the door of the closet that contained her prisoner, and demanded in a subdued voice—"Are you ready, Mr. Cavendish—are you ready?"

"Yes, dearest Signora," was replied from within; "and confoundedly tired of being thus boxed up in the dark."

"Provoking!" resumed Isola—"that stupid Antonio has locked the door and taken away the key. You will find the bell-rope in the corner; ring it, and he will come and let you out."

Little suspecting that the closet had been fitted up by Isola as a capacious shower-bath, the self-immolating victim did as he was bid; when instantly the loud plash of falling waters was heard, accompanied by clamorous cries of "Hallo!—what the devil!—curse it!—let me out—help—help—help!" and followed by violent kicks, bumps, and thumps against the door. Terrified by these sounds and outcries, of which they were utterly unable to conjecture the meaning, several of the ladies screamed in dismay, imploring Isola not to let out such a raging and rampant lion, or rather madman; while the gentleman, beginning to suspect that they might really have to deal with an unchained maniac, snatched up chairs and sofa cushions, and stood in an attitude of defence,—demonstrations and attitudes which produced so ludicrous an effect, that Isola, shrieking with laughter, could hardly find breath to say, "Remember your promise of returning roar for roar."

The heavy pattering and plashing began to diminish, although the vociferous oaths

and exclamations were if possible increased, when Isola drew back the bolt, threw open the door, and out burst the soused and dripping dandy, saluted by a shout of laughter from the whole party, amid which the convulsive merriment of Isola was the most ungovernable. All his senses confounded by his previous inexplicable ducking, and now suddenly delivered from a dark closet into a lighted chamber, occupied, as it appeared, by terrified females, and armed men in various postures of defence, no wonder that he stood staring at them for a few moments utterly bewildered and aghast; while they, as they marked his uncurled locks, his bedraggled garments, and the forlorn amazement of his moon-struck visage, could not refrain from a second cachinnation still more spasmodic and general than the first.

As he recovered the use of his eyes and faculties he began to recognise some of the faces by which he was surrounded, and to become aware of the trick that had been played him, when the infuriated dandy doubled his fist at Isola, exclaiming—"This

is an infamous piece of treachery!" rushed from the room, and scrambled down the stairs, venting—and for once in a natural, unaffected tone—a torrent of oaths and maledictions.

"Treachery!" said Isola, as soon as her risible ebullitions would allow her to speak. "Ladies and gentlemen, I appeal to you"—and Allan Latimer thought, as she said so, that her eye was particularly directed to himself—"This saucy coxcomb—with what presumptuous hopes I dare not trust myself even to imagine, had the audacity, when he heard that I intended to leave London this night, to propose that he should be my companion, and I suffered him to visit me in the delusion of his own vain conceit. Have I not done even more than I allowed him to hope—have I not literally showered honours upon his head, and made him my Knight Companion——of the Bath?—More than my implied promise have I performed, and the gratitude of this drowned and disappointed dandy is to charge me with treachery! If there be any here who have ever

dreamt of imitating his offence, I desire them to take warning by his unhappy fate."

More than one of her male auditors quailed beneath the significant menace of her eye, while the looks of others seemed to intimate that in their opinion she had taken an unfair advantage of her victim. "So!" said Isola, reading their thoughts, "you think this a coarse and unfeminine practical joke, little in accordance with my position as a servant of the public; but they have not bought the right to insult me with impunity: and how can I prevent them—I, a poor, lone, unprotected woman,—except by having recourse to a little stratagem and cunning, which are ever the strength of the weak? For social outrages which the law cannot reach, you men have invented the law of honour; we have no such remedy, or I would have made fire, instead of water, the instrument of my just vengeance. As it was, I met a gross insult by a gross retaliation, and I maintain that I was fully warranted in doing so. Nay, I am prepared for much more desperate measures than this harmless sous-

ing of a saucy coxcomb. I have Italian blood—ay, and brave blood too, in my veins; and if personal indignity were to be offered to me—of which I have sometimes entertained a fear—this is what I would instantly plunge into the heart of my audacious insulter."

With these words she snatched from beneath her robe an unsheathed dagger, brandishing it in a menacing attitude, while her features were lighted up with such a fierce beauty, that several of her visitants drew back with an expression of considerable alarm. "Nay, nay," laughed the Italian, resuming her gracious smile, "I am only supposing a case, but I am not sorry to make it publicly known that I carry about me something equivalent to steel-traps and spring-guns for the punishment of trespassers. And now, after thanking you all for the hearty roar with which you treated my lion, I must give you your dismissal. My carriage has been some time at the door, and I cannot wait any longer for the runaway and recreant knight who was to have been my

champion." So saying she bade them all a courteous good night;—the visitants departed, some of them abashed and frightened, even while they were most fascinated with her vivacious sallies:—Isola, throwing a roquelaure over the dress she wore, jumped into the carriage; her maid followed:—Antonio took his place in the rumble, and the postilion, impatient at having been so long delayed, drove off at a rapid pace.

"As I condemned the huckstering of your hospital bazaars," said Isola to Allan, on her return to London, "and maintained that when charity ceases to be its own reward, it becomes nothing better than barter, and the sale-room a Vanity Fair, it may be right to apprise you that I have refused all remuneration for my trip to Canterbury. I sought England, as I have often told you, for the express purpose of raising a certain amount of money in as short a time as possible, in the attainment of which avowed object you, probably, think me rather unscrupulous; but as I have not taken out a hawker's or pedlar's licence for

the purpose, I do not feel myself warranted to deal in charity."

"Yet in a paper of yesterday I saw you accused of having demanded the most exorbitant terms from the managers of this very charity. You will write to contradict it, of course."

"Not I: I know myself to be guilty of so many offences with which I am not charged, that I hardly feel authorised to defend myself against charges that are unjust. There is something like the consolation of martyrdom in submitting to unmerited imputations. A brand of this nature, like a self-inflicted penance, converts even the marks of seeming shame into an atoning honour. And now, having endeavoured to show you that, however fond I may be of money, I am not *always* mercenary, I am ready to comply with your request, and to introduce you to some of the eminent artists and literati who have done me the honour to seek my acquaintance. There is to be a grand conversazione tonight at the house of one of our most dis-

tinguished men of science, for which I have procured you an invitation, and where you will meet all the choice spirits of London, intellectual, scientific, and artistical."

"I shall be delighted to attend you. But how comes it, Isola, that these meetings seem never to be convened at the houses of our most successful writers?"

"In the first place, because they are too poor; in the second, because science is the fashion, and literature has worn itself out of vogue. Can you wonder at it? After all, it is but a round robin ending where it began—a treadmill in which the human faculties go plodding on for ever in the same steps, seemingly unconscious that one literary cycle is but a copy of its predecessor. As to the poor Muse, she only shows herself to solicit charity, hiding her impoverished head in the gratuitous corner of a Magazine or the almshouse of an Annual. Our poets are no longer able to keep a Pegasus:—

'Their unaspiring hack
Jogs on the broad way and the beaten track'——

of prose;—they have given up the thankless

and unprofitable trade of tying up old flowers into new nosegays; and, preferring solid pudding to empty praise, are content to be better paid as critics, biographers, and editors. People had long been getting indifferent to poetry; it may now be almost said that they hate it."

"Oh, surely not! Ours is perhaps a matter-of-fact, practical, utilitarian age: we may have men like the mathematician who objected to the dramas of Shakspere that they proved nothing; or others whose hard-working, calculating minds must see a tangible, gainful result before they can admire; but even these mental mechanics must have a sabbath for their souls, and where can they find it so well as in poetry? No, the love of poetry is in our nature; it may slumber, but it cannot altogether die. Its forms may change,—rhymes and metres may go out of vogue, but its spirit will survive,—nay, does survive and flourish too, for what are many of our popular novels and works of fiction but prose poems? The poetry of the stage has undergone a similar change.

People sitting at home, instead of going to the theatre, read plays in three volumes instead of five acts, and then complain that dramatic literature is extinct."

"Perhaps so; but that does not disprove my assertion that literature and all the imitative arts have had their Augustan eras, and attained the utmost perfection that man's limited faculties can accomplish, thousands of years ago, leaving to the luckless moderns the humble task of endeavouring to build up another Augustan era upon the model, and probably out of the ruins, of some predecessor."

"But always with the hope, and never without the chance, of improving."

"Indeed! If Homer, Virgil, Sappho, Anacreon were to revive, where would they find themselves eclipsed in their respective departments of literature? Were Phidias, Vitruvius, Raphael to be re-animated, what would they think of their modern competitors in sculpture, architecture, and painting? But now mark, Camillo mio, the difference between the

stationary or retrogressive character of the fine arts, and the ever-advancing march of science; for if the immortal Newton, or any other equally distinguished philosopher of a past age, were to be evoked from his grave, he would find himself, in many things, as far below the knowledge of his present successors, as he was superior to the ignorance of his contemporaries. The study of nature is, in fact, inexhaustible, and science, therefore, can never come to a stop."

"Every age, nevertheless, has its great literary names, and if writers attain less individual eminence than heretofore, it is because their art is so wisely diffused, and the number of competitors so largely increased. Has any author, at any era, attained greater renown or been more nobly remunerated for his talents than Sir Walter Scott? The very progressiveness that you claim for science seems to deny permanency of fame even to its most successful cultivators."

"But, at all events, what they do achieve

they win and enjoy instantly, instead of sacrificing a life to its attainment, like Sir Walter. They awake some fine morning and find themselves famous, or, perhaps, wealthy, if they have made any discovery that can be applied to profitable purposes—a stimulus to which the most philosophic of philosophers is not likely to be insensible."

"Especially if he recollects Lord Bacon's saying that speculative philosophy is like the lark, which soars upwards and returns to earth without gaining by its flight; while experimental philosophy is like the falcon, which mounts as high as the lark, but seldom comes down without its reward."

"Thank you for your apt quotation, for it confirms my statement. Yes, every scientific explorer is a sort of Columbus, who, if he does not discover a new world, may, like our navigators, perpetuate his name by giving it to some new headland or promontory in the sphere of knowledge upon which he adventures, and thus immortalise himself while he is benefiting his fellow-creatures. What are pyramids and mausoleums

compared to the sublime apotheosis of Herschel, who has a planet for his monument? What sepulchral lamp can emblazon a name so nobly and so inextinguishably as that of Davy? Volta and Galvani have built up an electric cenotaph for the eternal preservation of their renown; and even the botanists who have consigned their names to the frail petals of a new flower, have found its cup a more enduring sarcophagus, its honey-dew a more perennial embalment, than all the art lavished by the ancient Egyptians upon their mummies."

"You speak, Isola, as if you envied them their deathless celebrity."

"Not I, indeed, but I may perhaps feel it more keenly than another, because *my* celebrity, such as it is, is so mournfully fleeting and evanescent. An actor is only a human ephemera,

> 'Light as the mote that danceth in the beam,
> His life a flash, his memory a dream;'

but the songstress, who lives only in the dreamy memory of the ear, can hardly be said to possess any other than the audible

existence of a moment. The shadow of smoke upon water is more solid and lasting. Her life is a sound, her memory its echo, and both are forgotten almost as soon as heard. Like the swan, she must sing her own elegy, for she will have no other. But shame on me to be talking in this querulous mood; I, who have so many causes for joy and gratitude! Away with such unthankful strains, and let us hurry to our conversazione, for we shall hardly make our way into the Doctor's crowded rooms if we delay our departure any longer."

Stimulated by the presence of their friendly and enlightened host, as well as by the various objects of science and *virtù* distributed through the rooms, the party fell into little knots, each engaged in some animated discussion which, without being pedantic or over-blue as to literature, or too technically scientific for listeners of ordinary intelligence, afforded an abundance of social enjoyment to a very numerous collection of visitants, while it avoided a single recurrence to the common topics in other coteries—the

opera, the fashions, and scandal. Allan was here introduced to several really great men, —the aristocracy of nature—writers and artists, with whose names and works he had long been familiar, whose acquaintance he was proportionably gratified to make, and in whose society he passed a most delightful evening.

On the following day he was still more gratified by accompanying Isola to the studios of London's most distinguished sculptors, in all of whom he noticed that courteous urbanity and polished refinement of manners which in every age has characterized the cultivators of the fine arts. "I agree with you," said Isola, as they walked home together, "that sculpture and painting have attained great present perfection in that which may be called their mechanical department—the mere imitation of nature—especially in portraits and busts;—but in their loftier range—in the spiritual and allegorical, in ideal and superhuman beauty—in embodying the invisible, and giving a tangible form to the dim mysterious yearn-

ings of the soul, I do not recognise the same pre-eminence."

"And to what would you attribute this inferiority—supposing it to exist?"

"Partly to the Reformation, and to the severe Iconoclastic spirit which broke up the long established union between the fine arts and religion. Genius is a flower that blows most luxuriantly in the full light of heaven. Never attaining its perfect development without enthusiasm, or that feeling of a private revelation which unites the God within us to the God above us, it has never, at any period of the world, accomplished an unchallenged triumph, or sent forth an undisputed masterpiece, except when its efforts have been sublimised by the influence of religion. You must combine the stimulants of both worlds—you must make the work of the artist a gratifying act of devout worship, as well as a means of fame and wealth, if you would raise the man above himself and lift his statue or his painting out of its materiality. Of this reverential

art, which, when employed on a sacred subject, would deem it sacrilege to be satisfied with anything less than absolute and uniform perfection, you will find a striking illustration in the Theseus of the Elgin Marbles. Sculptors travel from all parts of Europe to study and admire the back of that celebrated figure, which, from its position in the pediment of the Parthenon, could never have been seen, was never intended to be seen. What cared Phidias for the eyes of man? He believed that he was sculpturing a demigod—that the goddess Minerva would see it, and upon her altar he would not offer up any but a finished, faultless image."

"And to this feeling you would attribute, I suppose, the general superiority of modern artists in Catholic countries?"

"Yes, in their loftier conceptions. Nay, more—I would maintain, that without a similar sentiment in the spectator, he cannot fully and fairly appreciate, or even understand, the work produced by such inspiration. The impressions of a believing pagan

contemplating a statue of Jupiter must have been totally different from ours. He looked up to it reverently as an embodiment of his own idea of omnipotence, which he could compare with his own imaginary heaven: we look down upon it contemptuously as to its divine claims, and can therefore measure it with nothing but earth and man."

"Spurzheim, I am told, maintains that all the statues of the pagan deities exhibit the exact craniological formation which their respective characters would require."

"Well, that is his religion, and so far he can admire them more profoundly and devoutly than any man who is not a craniologist."

"Among the Greeks, too, there was a constant and high competition in art, as well as opportunities for its triumphant display, which are of much more rare occurrence in modern times."

"Yes, and great men without great occasions are like uninflated balloons, which, however vast may be their capacity, have

neither means to display it, nor to attain that proper elevation which may enable them to attract the eyes of mankind. In these peaceful times we have no triumphs to record, except those of the never-ceasing combatant—Death: our sculpture, therefore, is chiefly monumental."

"Of which we saw a beautiful specimen this morning in the first studio we visited, although the bust of the deceased appeared to me deficient in animation, perhaps from the want of a chiselled pupil to the eye."

"As it was not intended to represent the living man, but to give an outline of his lineaments when dead, an intention to be gathered from the ungarmented state of the bust, I think the artist was right in omitting the pupil, which is so expressive of life. Sculpture professes to imitate form only, and not colour; I question, therefore, whether the pupil ought ever to be marked."

"There is classical authority for it, however, and even for its representation by precious stones."

"There are classical barbarisms, as in the

mixture of coloured marbles in a bust, which only teach us what we ought to avoid. And now I will mention a social barbarism which we ought equally to eschew, namely, usurping and wasting the time of a companion, as I have been doing for the last hour, when you know that he has an engagement of business which ought not to be broken. Look at yonder clock. Have you not a lesson to give at this hour?"

"Thank you for the hint: but you could hardly do less than give it me; for, as you make me completely forget time, it is clearly your duty to remind me of its lapse. How he varies in his pace! In your society, how he plies his wings; in that of others, how he hobbles upon crutches! I will only see you to your door, and then jump into a cab, and drive to my appointment."

CHAPTER V.

THERE is a flower in the fields, "And maidens call it Love-in-idleness," whose name is strictly applicable to the attachment which springs up in the bosom of youth, not so much from a well-considered preference of its object, as from the want of occupation, as well as from the absence of any other recipient for the affections. Such, in a great measure, had been the regard of Allan for Ellen Molloy—the attraction of propinquity—the preference arising from circumstance, rather than sympathy. No wonder that the impression was gradually worn out by the new sensations now passing over his mind in such rapid succession. No wonder that his intenerated heart, instead of being fortified against fresh attractions,

should only be rendered more susceptible to their influence, even as cinders are more easily inflammable than the coal which has never felt the fire. A much deeper and more durable impression must have been speedily obliterated, especially in the bosom of one so sensitive as Allan to the combined influence of genius and the Graces, by a creature so rarely gifted, so truly fascinating as Isola.

The chance which had procured him her acquaintance and friendship, had indeed thrown into his way a perilous—an almost irresistible temptation. Ardent as was his admiration of beauty, he might have repelled the attraction of her personal charms; but her various other enchantments, her unrivalled talents, her girlish vivacity, united to so much sterling good sense, and above all her strict propriety and purity of conduct amid solicitations and enticements that many similarly circumstanced would have found it difficult to withstand,—these were daily making deeper inroads upon his imagination and his feelings. Persuading himself, with

the common delusion of young men, that he was only rendering a just homage to her unparagoned merits, when he was suffering his heart to be unconsciously penetrated with a new attachment, he dreamt not of withdrawing himself from a society so delightful and so unobjectionable. On the contrary, their friendship assumed every day a character of closer intimacy. Isola had undertaken to give him lessons in singing; they performed duets together out of the popular operas; and, as he listened to her exquisite voice, addressing him often in the language of the most impassioned love, his heart thrilled with what he believed to be an intense admiration of her vocal powers, though the source of his emotion was of a far deeper and more tender nature. Under such a teacher, and with such stimulants, it may well be supposed that his progress was rapid; Isola, astonished at his pathetic tones, and the expressive language of his eyes, was enthusiastic in his praises; and the enraptured pupil found it exceedingly difficult to tear himself away from such delicious meet-

ings. When not in her immediate society, he was always hovering around her, attending invariably at the Opera when she performed, to offer up the silent homage of his thrilling heart, for his emotions were too profound to seek a vent in outward expressions of applause; and in her absence he was constantly thinking of her, although he remained unconscious of the potent spell she was exercising. Such insensible impressions are the most dangerous, and perhaps the most pleasant; for an undeveloped love, like the unblown rose-bud, gives a promise of fragrance, beauty, and delight, while the thorns are yet too minute to excite suspicion of a wound.

Pretending to find some annoyance in his lodgings, he removed to larger and better furnished apartments in the Quadrant, immediately opposite to Isola's, which was the real secret of the change; for although a day rarely passed in which they did not meet, he could here catch additional glimpses of her, especially when she went out into her little garden, as was her custom every morn-

ing, to trim her flowers. This occasioned him to be more at home than had hitherto been his wont; and when he knew her to be absent, he beguiled the time in writing.

At her suggestion he had composed a short poem on an event of passing interest, which, being inserted in a popular magazine, and copied into one of the papers, had attracted considerable notice. Thus encouraged, he became a regular contributor, both of prose and poetry, for which he was liberally remunerated; and finding his pecuniary means so unexpectedly increased, he thought himself warranted in departing from the system of strict economy which he had hitherto observed. London society, independently of its charm of novelty, had addressed itself in a peculiar manner to his tastes and sympathies, especially when he contrasted it with that of Woodcote. Literature and science had here fixed their headquarters: here were there not only cheap exhibitions of all the wonders and masterpieces of nature and of art, but accessible associations for the culture of every taste,

the prosecution of every refined and elevated pursuit. With several of the most eminent men of genius and talent he had already made acquaintance, and invitations to some recent evening parties had apprised him that in London it is easy to procure, at a very moderate expense, intellectual gratifications of a very high order—admission to the companionship of artists, actors, authors—of all, in short, who can charm and enlighten the social circle. From among these he selected a certain number of associates; but as the purity of his moral perceptions remained as delicate and immaculate as ever, notwithstanding the corrupting influences of the metropolis, he endeavoured to exclude as far as possible all those depraved or dissipated characters whose gifts and attainments could no more reconcile him to their vices, than could the glittering embellishments of a coffin to the corrupting corpse within it.

A man of talent and fair fame, even though his position be not a very elevated one, may assemble in London a company

such as we have been describing at less cost than he could entertain a party of blockheads from a higher sphere. It was Allan's pride, as soon as he made this discovery, to reduce it to proof, by giving small supper-parties at his lodgings. Accompanied by some of her female friends, Isola, when she found how carefully his guests had been selected, consented now and then to meet them, and as Allan had provided himself with a piano, she would occasionally sing for their entertainment, a favour never bestowed upon any other, and for which she now accounted by playfully declaring that as she had adopted him for a brother, she considered herself at home in his lodgings. This operated as such a prodigious attraction, that he was repeatedly obliged to refuse invitations to people soliciting them; the knowledge of the difficulty increased, as usual, the anxiety for admittance; his *petit soupers* became the fashion; men of rank as well as of high intellectual eminence were happy to make his acquaintance, and procure a seat at his board: and the warm-

hearted host, flattered by such visitants, and anxious to do honour both to them and to Isola, the magnet by which they were mainly attracted, deviated more perhaps than strict prudence would warrant from the simplicity of his former repasts.

At his outset he had professed no stronger allurement to his humble board than "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," so often quoted and so seldom witnessed; but the sparkling of iced champagne now mingled with the coruscations of wit: Perigord pies were discussed, as well as subjects of literature, art, and science; and the guests, some of whom were more distinguished for swallowing than for uttering good things, protracted these symposia to a late hour. His whole life having hitherto necessitated the practice of a strict economy, he had never acquired the habit of tasting wine, and still restricted himself to lemonade or water; but being naturally hospitable, as well as sanguine as to his continued means of being so, he found it difficult to check an expenditure which he knew to be unselfish, and

which even assumed the garb of a generous virtue.

Passionately fond of water-colour drawings, and himself no mean proficient in the art, he attended the studios of some of the most eminent professors with whom he had made acquaintance, began by picking up such smaller and cheaper specimens as came within his present means, and as he obtained merited praise for his discernment, and felt the rage of collecting grow with its indulgence, he was tempted to anticipate what he believed to be an increasing income, and to give his note of hand for a portion of the purchase money of fresh drawings, when he could not conveniently advance the whole. Nor did this strike him as an act of improvidence, since he believed himself to be making a safe investment in buying what he might probably re-sell, should it become necessary, at first cost, if not at an advanced price. To a person of elegant taste the will is a subtle casuist, where its indulgence assumes the form of a commendable zeal for the fine arts; such a man is never more ex-

travagant than when he flatters himself that he is able to carry on a profitable trade, and can actually make money by spending it in articles of *virtù*. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte.* A first purchase for the embellishment of one's rooms, like a first falsehood or a first offence, is very apt to necessitate a hundred others. A handsome new article makes the old ones ugly; they must be replaced by more appropriate successors: nothing is so offensive as a patchy inconsistency. It will generally be found that a love of material and visible order and congruity accompanies the love of moral propriety, for there is more sympathy than we suspect between the eye and the heart. Allan could not bear to see any article out of its place or out of character with its neighbour; even a frame that hung in the smallest degree awry was an eyesore to him; regularity, fitness, and accordance were necessary to his comfort. He soon discovered, therefore, that it was requisite to have a new paper to his rooms, the old one not assorting with his drawings: this was no sooner put

up, than the old carpet became too shabby to be endured; and when a new one was laid down, its bright hues rendered fresh furniture absolutely indispensable.

Strange as it may sound, the very narrowness of his previous income, and the strict economy of his earlier life, made him less attentive to these expenses than he might otherwise have been; for the money he had been latterly receiving so much exceeded what he had been accustomed to disburse, that he fancied himself a comparatively rich man, and thought, in his ignorance of London expenses and London tradesmen, that he might indulge his taste without any risk of embarrassment. Perhaps there is no class more subject to assaults upon their purse, in the shape of charitable appeals, than actors, artists, and musical performers; certainly there is none that responds more liberally to such demands. Allan was soon beset with applications of this nature, and as he was generous, almost to a fault, the only charity he forgot was that which begins at home. To many of the public institutions

also, especially those connected with the fine arts, he became a subscriber, reconciling himself to his increasing expenditure by resolving to ply his pen with an additional activity, and taking it for granted that he could thus procure a certain addition to his ways and means. Among her other accomplishments Isola was a perfect equestrian, and he had often accompanied her in little excursions around the neighbourhood of London; but he was charged so much for the use of a hack, and the insidious logic of making a present outlay to effect an ultimate saving was so conclusive, that he was induced to purchase a horse; and as Isola's was a remarkably handsome animal, it was requisite, of course, to have one that would not disgrace its companion.

An intimacy so close and so long continued gave rise, in the first instance, to all sorts of reports; some of which, being derogatory to the fame of his fair friend, and coming to Allan's ears, had involved him in several unpleasant disputes, though they led to no more serious results than his indignantly

repudiating the acquaintance and silencing the innuendoes of those who presumed to hint a doubt of her unblemished honour. After a little while a close observance of her conduct (and there was no lack of rigorous and jealous eyes to watch her) not only dissipated these injurious surmises, but confirmed a new rumour, originating in her invariably terming Allan her brother, that she was really and truly his sister, married to an Italian, although she had not thought fit—doubtless for good reasons of her own—to produce her husband. As this report would sanction the continuance of their friendship without subjecting either party to scandalous insinuations, Allan gave it a tacit acquiescence, and yielded without reserve to the increasing delight that he experienced from the daily repetition of his visits.

Thus passed several months without producing any material alteration in the position of the principal personages commemorated in these pages, either in the Quadrant or at Woodcote; and also without throwing a particle of light—without even eliciting

a plausible suggestion that might tend to elucidate the mystery connected with the supposed monk; with the lunatic lady; with the corpse that had undergone such an inexplicable process in the unfurnished house in the city; with the subsequent apparition of Captain Harcourt, although in Quaker's garb, and his embarkation in the neighbourhood of Gravesend. So unmercifully had Allan been ridiculed for his statement of what he had witnessed with his own eyes; so confidently was it assigned to the effects of a nightmare, or of some spectral illusion; so unpleasant did he feel it to be looked upon as the victim of deception or credulity, that he had ceased to make reference to the strange tale in the presence of others, or even to attempt a solution of the enigma by further conjectures of his own.

In this lapse of time, however, one change had occurred, one discovery had been made, calculated to produce a marked influence upon the destinies of Allan Latimer, for he had at length found out that he was deeply, passionately in love with Isola. So long as

he could abandon himself to the delights of her society, without the prospect of any immediate interruption—so long as the intoxication of his happiness remained undissipated by any thoughts of their parting—he cared not to analyse his own present feelings, he shrunk from the consideration of the future, lest it should awake him from his beatific trance. It was the enchantress herself who broke the charm, for Isola at this juncture began to proclaim that her mission was approaching its termination—that the sum she had made a solemn vow to raise was nearly accumulated—that she should shortly bid adieu to England—that she should quickly be wafted back to her own happy land; declarations ever made with a more exuberant joy, a more irrepressible rapture, and ever falling upon the ear of her auditor with a more saddening, a more heart-withering shock.

Not until he was overwhelmed with the fear of losing her did he feel that he had already given up to her his whole heart; and this discovery was made at the very

moment when the unbounded ecstasy with which she contemplated her return to Italy, and consequently their eternal separation, painfully proved that her own affections were entirely disengaged, that she could never reciprocate his passion, that she could part from him without one compunctious visiting.

Many were the acts of kindness, the proofs of friendship that he could recall, exclusively of her generous and prompt interference to effect his liberation; manifold and unquestionable were the evidences of the sincere pleasure she had derived from his society; yet in all their innumerable interviews, and upon the countless occasions that might well have elicited her feelings, he could not recall a single look, a single word, an intimation of any sort, that might betoken a warmer sentiment than that of her sisterly regard which she had so openly and so invariably professed. A being so impressionable, with a countenance whose mobility rendered it a dial-plate to the workings of her heart, could never have concealed her emotions.

Quickened as were his own perceptions

and memory by his anxiety to detect some instance of predilection more impassioned than what she might bestow upon a brother, he could not conjure up, out of the records of the past, a solitary betrayal of this nature. No sooner had he discovered his love than he found it to be hopeless, a disclosure which plunged him into an immediate dejection of spirits; and if he shook off his melancholy in the presence of Isola, it only returned with additional force after he had left her.

One morning when he called in the Quadrant he found her busily engaged in packing up the little figure of Psyche, an operation which she would not entrust to any hands but her own. Her exertions had not only given an unusual brilliancy to her complexion, but had dishevelled a portion of her profuse hair, which ever and anon, as she raised her graceful head, she would shake aside with a laughing smile, presenting to the eyes of her admiring lover a more beautiful vision than ever he had imagined, even in his poetic dreams. As her task proceeded she repeatedly kissed the image, bending

over it with looks of impassioned tenderness, and unconsciously assuming attitudes that exhibited in all its beauty the symmetry of her exquisite, her faultless form, while she talked to the inanimate marble with all the dulcet tenderness which her own silver tones could impart to her own mellifluous language. Never, no, never had she appeared, in the eyes now immoveably riveted upon her, half so graceful, so bewitching, so irresistibly fascinating. "This is rather ungentle work for female hands," said Isola, resting herself upon a chair—"but it is a labour of love; so, indeed, is every preparation that announces my return to Italy: no wonder, therefore, that I sing, and rattle, and talk all sorts of nonsense while thus occupied. And yet there is one regret that haunts me in the midst of all my gaiety—yes, there is one drop of bitterness in my cup of joy;—it is the approaching separation from my kind, my accomplished, my good, my pure-minded brother—my Camillo!"

With a beaming and affectionate smile, she held out her hand to Allan, who pressed

it ardently and yet respectfully to his lips. "My speedy departure," resumed Isola, "has not, I hope, produced an equally depressing effect upon you, for I promise you faithfully that I will maintain our friendship unbroken in the form of correspondence; and letters, you know, are quickly transmitted from Naples:—but methinks, Camillo, you have been out of spirits lately; your pale cheeks, too, seem to indicate a return of your former indisposition. For the present I cannot spare you! our remaining hours of social enjoyment together are too few; but as soon as I shall have quitted England, I trust you will resume your steam-boat excursions to Gravesend, or some other place. Have I read your looks aright? Do you really feel unwell?"

"Not so much unwell, as unhappy—miserable," sighed Allan, after a pause.

"Good Heaven! you astonish and grieve me. May I not know the cause of your sorrow?" Allan shook his head despondingly. "You must, you shall admit me to your confidence. Am I not your sister? am

I not about to part from you for ever, and would you have me quit you without knowing the cause of your distress?"

"I dare not—I have not the presumption to reveal it," murmured Allan; "the very fear that you may guess it covers me with confusion, for I am well aware——"

"Nay, then, the information I received from Crevetti, when first we became acquainted, enables me to divine your malady. You are in love—your silence, your agitation, your conscious looks confirm my surmises. And can a man like my own good and gifted Camillo love in vain?—What obstacles oppose themselves to your wishes?"

"Alas! I have been so blind in my infatuation, as hardly to have looked forward, scarcely to have weighed the difficulties, until I had the wretchedness of discovering that they were insuperable."

"Take courage, my brother: what is this impediment which you deem so insurmountable?"

"My own demerits of all sorts—my humble station, my lowly fortune—the pre-

sumption which has led me to bestow my aspiring affections upon one in every respect so immeasurably my superior, that I feel confused, overwhelmed even, in alluding to my folly, rather say my madness."

"Believe me, Oh! believe me, if this be all, you have little ground for misgiving, and none for despair. Love, you know, levels all distinctions; and I will boldly venture to affirm, that even in this aristocratic and money-loving land there are few females worthy of Allan Latimer,—and I am sure he would love none other,—who would not feel themselves flattered as well as honoured by the offer of his hand and heart."

"Say you so? say you so, Isola? Oh! Heaven, what joy, what rapture if it might prove true! But beware, for pity's sake beware how you encourage hopes, which in another moment may be dashed to earth."

"I say it, I repeat it with confidence. Nay, more, if you will confide to me the name of your lofty inamorata, I swear to you, should she be personally known to me, that I will become your advocate, your in-

tercessor, your ambassador, your suitor if you will, and spare you the confession of a love which you are too modest, too humble, too foolishly diffident to prefer in your own person."

"You would be my good genius, my guardian angel—you would raise me from despair to hope,—you would entitle yourself to my eternal gratitude."

"To whom, then, shall I address myself? I will fly to her at once,—I will instantly become her supplicant. You pause—you are agitated, you tremble;—why do you hesitate?"

"Will you swear to forgive me, should you be offended at the presumption of my love?"

"Nonsense! What right have *I* to be offended? But I swear it, nevertheless. Now then—whisper me the name of this paragon of whom you are thus desperately enamoured?"

"Her name—her name," hesitated the lover, as he gasped for breath, and fixed his eyes upon the ground—"is Isola Guardia!"

"Gracious God!" screamed the Italian, clasping her hands vehemently together, and recoiling several paces, with a look of mingled amazement and distress.

"Yes, yes," gasped Allan, with a nervous earnestness, as he followed and seated himself by her side—"yes, dearest Isola! but remember your vow of forgiveness, and allow me to disburthen my bosom of a secret which has at once formed my misery and my delight. I love you, have long loved you, deeply, passionately! Oh! who could associate so much with charms so fascinating, with talents so unrivalled, and not become enamoured? I would offer you my hand, my heart, the devotion of my whole future life, but alas! your words, your looks—yes—I see, I feel, I know that you do not—that you cannot love me in return."

During this speech Isola had sat as if transfixed, her hands still clasped, her eyes riveted to the floor, her mouth partially open, an expression of profound grief upon her features, and thus she remained during a painful silence of some length, when she ex-

claimed with a profound sigh, and in a tone of self-accusing anguish, "Selfish, thoughtless, unfeeling wretch that I am! I ought to have foreseen the possibility of this, to have guarded against it—and yet who could have anticipated, who could have—Why, Crevetti told me that your affections were engaged—that you were betrothed to a lady at Woodcote, that you came to push your fortune in London, in order that you might be enabled to marry her, which is one reason why I have ever been so anxious to advance your interests, and in this firm belief I encouraged an intimacy which I imagined to be as unobjectionable as I hoped it would prove agreeable to both parties."

"Crevetti was wrong—very wrong; in his confused apprehension of our language, he must have misunderstood me. I told him—perhaps with a little degree of ambiguity, for it was a subject of some delicacy—that I left Woodcote in order to forget a youthful, —an ill-advised,—an unrequited attachment. Alas! I fear I have only escaped from one, to plunge into another still more hopeless."

"This has been a cruel mistake on all sides. Oh! that Crevetti had not thus misguided me! Oh! that we had never met! On my soul I believed that you were affianced to another. What an unhappy fate is mine! Many are the insulting propositions that I have received from wretches whom I despised; and now, when an offer of his hand and heart is made to me by a man of honour, by one whose principles I respect, whose conduct towards me has ever been pure, high-minded, and delicate, whom I must always esteem and regard, but whom, alas! I can never——Allan Latimer! I am now a petitioner for *your* forgiveness: if I appear ungrateful, unkind,—if I am compelled to hurt your feelings, to wound your peace of mind—say—for God's sake say that you pardon me." In uttering these words, she took his hand, raising it with a gentle pressure between both of hers, and as she looked imploringly upwards in the face of her lover, he perceived that tears were stealing down her cheeks.

"Oh! Heaven!" exclaimed Allan, thrilling

throughout his whole frame; "be not thus agitated, thus distressed:—your happiness is ten thousand times dearer to me than my own; let not my unfortunate passion give you —I cannot—cannot bear to see those tears— never will I again disturb you with the mention of my attachment. I know my fate—I will spare your gentle bosom the pain of rejecting my suit—I know that there is some insurmountable obstacle—I am quite aware, dear Isola, that you cannot command your affections."

Releasing the hand she had taken, the Italian threw herself back in her chair, pressed her handkerchief to her eyes, sobbed with an almost hysterical vehemence, and then swallowing down her emotion, and assuming a forced composure, exclaimed— "Insurmountable indeed! Listen to me, Camillo, my brother,—thank God those endearing titles need never be resigned—listen to me. I have no heart, no affections to bestow, for I am already a wife and a mother—the most fortunate of wives, the happiest of mothers."

"A wife! a mother!" cried Allan, while his features fell, his heart sank within him, and the perspiration started from his brow.

"Compose yourself, and hear me," resumed Isola: "you see I am calm, at least much calmer than I was. You have made *your* confession, I must now make mine. No more reserves—they have occasioned misery and mischief enough; it is right that we should fully understand each other. Camillo is my husband!".

"Would that you had termed him so in our first interview, instead of calling him your brother!"

"Pardon me, I said that you were the very image of my Camillo—that I should never be able to call you by any other name. *You* it was who assumed him to be my brother. You it was who asked permission to call me sister, to which I gave a ready assent because my marriage was clandestine, and I had reasons for still keeping it secret. Never until now, and to no one but yourself, have I confessed it; but understand me, my friend, my brother—for I would not for

worlds forfeit the smallest portion of your respect—there is nothing improper, nothing dishonourable in my marriage, and if I thought that you were now sufficiently composed to listen——"

"Yes, yes," interposed Allan, "I am more tranquil already, for where there is no hope there is little perturbation—despair is calm—and anything that relates to you must ever be deeply interesting."

"My narrative is soon told. My husband, as I have already apprised you, is in personal appearance, as in many other respects, the exact counterpart of yourself. Can you wonder that I loved him?"

"Methinks I can much more easily account for his passionate admiration of Isola."

"Our attachment was mutual; we were both young; we loved each other with all the ardour of Neapolitans; but I was almost penniless. Camillo was in little better plight, being only an assistant sculptor to his father, who angrily forbade his marrying; promising, however, not only to give his consent to it, but to resign to him the

business of the studio, whenever he should pay over to him, either from his wife's portion or from any other source, the sum of fifteen thousand ducats. Camillo was dispatched, upon business connected with his profession, to my native island of Ischia, where I was then residing with a relation of my deceased father; we were privately married; he found frequent excuses for visiting me, and these interviews became more frequent after the birth of my beautiful boy. Oh! how I wish you could see him! you never beheld so fine a little fellow. But fears and misgivings began to mingle with a felicity too exquisite to be without alloy; suspicions were awakened by the frequent absences of my husband; his father was choleric and avaricious, and we had reason to fear, in the event of a discovery, that he would discard his son, and sell the valuable business to a stranger. In this difficulty I swore that I would devote my talents to purchase my husband's pardon, and secure our joint independence by raising the fifteen thousand ducats. So large a sum might

have appalled others, but I was young, sanguine, and, above all, I was a wife and a mother. Nature had given me a fine voice, which my mother, an opera singer, had carefully cultivated, and which I studied night and day to improve. My husband assented, though not without much difficulty, to my scheme. I accepted a liberal engagement to come to England as a public singer Antonio, an old servant of my father, agreed to accompany me: my success you have seen. I have accomplished my vow, and I am about to return to Italy, to the best husband in the world, and to my dear, my beautiful boy, with more than sufficient means to secure every object which I had solemnly pledged myself to attain. You have sometimes thought me covetous, grasping, mercenary,—nay, shake not your head, I know you have. You can now understand the care and the delight with which I have hoarded up my money. It was for my husband, for my child, for an independent home in my own dear Italy. Young and unprotected as I was, except by my faithful old

Antonio, mine was a perilous undertaking. You know how I have been assailed, what splendid insults have been offered to me. Most thankful am I to Heaven that I have escaped every snare, every temptation, and that never for a single moment have I deviated, either in thought, word, or deed, from the duty that I owed to my husband, to my child, to myself. Do I stand excused in your eyes?"

"Excused! O Isola! I admire, I revere you a thousand times more than ever. I dare not now say that I *love* you, for you are the wife of another; may I not add, however, that you have afforded me abundant excuse for my former passion, at the very moment when I give you my sacred promise never to mention it for the future?"

"It is a vow worthy of yourself, for it is pure and noble."

"But, O Isola! (may I not still call you my *dear* Isola) how difficult will be its observance! I admired your beauty, your talents; and well I might, for both are unrivalled: but your rare virtues were the

winners of my heart; and alas! those virtues shine forth the most refulgently when I am condemned to resign you for ever."

"And has *my* heart, think you, no struggle to sustain? It is throbbing now—will long throb with anguish at the thought of my having given pain—God knows how unintentionally!—to my best, my dearest, my noblest friend. Long will it be before I shall obtain my own pardon: let me—let me hear you say that I have yours."

"Surely, surely, I have more need of it than you."

"Well, then," cried Isola, springing up, kissing him on the cheek, and offering her own to him in return; "there; we have exchanged the sacred kiss of reconciliation and forgiveness. Henceforth we are again brother and sister,—friends, ay, and dear friends too, for the remainder of our lives; but from this moment we must, we must—" her voice faltered, and she was unable to proceed, but presently subduing her emotion, she added in a firmer tone, "we must meet no more."

"No more! no more!" cried Allan; "O Isola! you would not be so cruel. Suffer me, for the few days that you are to remain in England, suffer me to continue my visits, that thus I may conquer my—be reconciled to your loss by degrees."

"What! would you attempt to smother a flame by gunpowder? No, my brother, no; we will deserve each other's respect to the last. The feelings of this moment are too painful to be repeated—you cannot deny it, for the tears are trembling in your eyes; —you would fain speak, and your accents die away upon your lips. Well then, let the cruel word be first spoken by me. My dear, dear friend, farewell! farewell for ever. May God preserve and bless you!" She rushed out of the room, and as she hurried up the stairs, gave vent to the loud and passionate sobs which she found it impossible any longer to restrain.

From that moment Allan never saw her more!

CHAPTER VI.

We return to Woodcote, where, as has already been stated, no material change had occurred during a period of several months among the principal characters introduced to the notice of the reader; although one of our subordinate personages had in that interval experienced a revolution not less signal than beneficial. This was Farmer Chubbs, whose confirmed and continued intemperance had ended in the inevitable fate of drunkards—ill health, ruin, arrest, and imprisonment. Few could present a more striking proof of the enslaving and infatuating influences of this vice, for the old soldier was not only a sensible man, but in every other respect might be termed a good and moral member of

society, while he still retained so strong a sense of honour, and of the value of the badge he had won at Waterloo, that it was carefully and invariably concealed when he felt himself unworthy of its display. Since his incarceration in Gloucester gaol he had kept it in his pocket, where he occasionally twiddled it with his finger and thumb, as he sat apart, ruminating on the lamentable results of his recent career, and the miserable plight of his wife and family, to whom he was tenderly attached; reflections which he had been accustomed to drive away by fresh potations, but which, in the compulsory sobriety of his present situation, clung to him with tenacity, and stung him with the most poignant self-upbraidings.

Thus was he occupied when the gaoler, a humane and enlightened man, informed him that he had permitted a missionary from the Tee-totalers of Sheffield to address the prisoners, and recommended that he should hear what he had to say. From a vague feeling of curiosity, rather than from the least expectation of benefit, the farmer

walked into the press-yard, where he saw a coarse, hard-featured, vulgar-looking, but respectably dressed man, standing on a chair surrounded by a knot of prisoners, most of whom were mocking, mowing, and jibing, while a few seemed disposed to give him serious attention.

"Here comes another on ye," said the missionary, who spoke in a provincial accent and without any very scrupulous attention to grammatical rules; "you're another drunkard, ar'n't ye?" Chubbs, to whom this question was addressed, hung down his head, and made no reply. "Lord love ye! you needn't give no answer. I can tell a drunkard half a mile off, even when he is sober. I know him by his bloated face, his soddened complexion, his stupid fuddled eye, his shaking limbs, and his tottering walk. *You're* one, and *you're* one, and that ugly chap making faces at me is another."

Little complimentary as was this mode of address, it was well adapted to his auditors, for it raised a laugh, put them in a good humour, and disposed them to listen. "Bless

your tell-tale phizzes, I should rather say your *mugs*," pursued the orator, "I not only knows you when I sees you, but I knows where to find you. First of all I looks for you at booths, beer-houses, gin-shops, and such like; and last of all I looks for you where you're all sure to come to—at work-houses and gaols. That gemman yonder, with the dirty jacket and never a neckcloth, cries out,—Who the deuce are you? Well, I'll tell you who I am, and what I was. Once I was such a notorious dram-drinker,—worse, I'll be bound, than the worst of you—that I was nicknamed Drunken Joe. I was one of the furnace-men in a manufactory at Sheffield, and thought, like all the rest on 'em, that I couldn't do such hot work unless I drank hard; but that's a humbug, as I can prove. Well, becoming a reg'lar drunkard, in course I got in debt, in course I lost my health, in course I lost my work, in course I got into prison—that's always the upshot. Well, Master called on me next day, and he said—Joe, says he, you're a sad drunken fellow, but you're a capital

workman, and, what's more, you've got a scrap or two of good sense in your head. Now, if I was to pay your debts, d'ye think you could take the pledge never to taste no more fermented liquors, except for medical purposes and the offices of religion? I don't like making vows, says I, but I'll promise to try. That'll do, Joe, says he, I know my man;—so he paid the shot, and I got out of quod. Two days arter I was walking down High Street along with my wife, who was precious shabby, in course, when I see Master a-coming atween two ladies. Well, what d'ye think he did? He drops their arms, comes up to me and says, Joe, says he, I must shake hands with you now, for as you have become a sober man you have become a gentleman,—which took such an effect on me, that hang me if I could help crying, and going home directly, and falling upon my knees, and taking the Temperance pledge, which I have faithfully kept ever since." *

* These are facts, stated on the authority of a Temperance missionary from one of our manufacturing towns.

"And what did you get by it, master Teetotaler?" demanded one of the prisoners. "Why, first and foremost, I recovered my health, then I recovered my situation, and as I found that good beefsteaks and water enabled me to do twice the work of the dram-drinkers—for gin's only a stimulus, not a support—it warn't long afore I paid all my debts, got my home and my family comfortable, and what d'ye think was the last thing I did afore ever I left home?—why, I gave thirty shillings for a shawl for my wife."

In this strain he continued for some time longer, informing his auditors that he was paid by small voluntary subscriptions among the workmen for travelling through England to inculcate upon the labouring population the incalculable benefits of Tee-totalism. Nor had they selected a bad advocate; his own personal history illustrating his doctrine, while his manners, appearance, and even the homely language that proved his humble origin, were perhaps his best recommendations with the congenial class to whom he

was deputed. What influence his oration might produce upon his other auditors we know not, but he had no sooner left the prison than John Chubbs retired to his little room, where he remained for upwards of two hours, pondering deeply and exclusively upon what he had just heard, and wondering whether he could ever summon resolution to imitate the example of Drunken Joe.

By one of those coincidences which sometimes occur in real life, but which are often condemned in novels as improbable, Roger Crab on the same morning paid a visit at the Manor-House, for the purpose of having a chat with its proprietor on the subject of the imprisoned farmer, whose misfortunes formed the prevalent topic of conversation in the neighbourhood. "Ah! Captain Molloy, are you here?" said the old gentleman as he entered the parlour; "nay, don't move —don't let me send you away. Strange as it may sound, I had rather you would stay a little longer, for I want to consult with our friend Mr. Brown how to get a foolish,

dissipated fellow out of trouble, and perhaps your long experience in such matters—"

"Faith and troth, you may say that. What I have done in extricating fellows out of their difficulties is quite incredible."

"That I believe," said Crab, looking at the ceiling and counting the tips of his fingers.

"Yes; I have always made it a point to assist honest fellows as much as I could."

"You could not possibly lay down a more disinterested rule. Yours is not the charity, I see, that begins at home. Well, neighbour Brown, what's to become of this drunken, good-for-nothing fellow, John Chubbs?"

"Zooks! Sir, what's to become of the rent he owes me? that's the question. As to the drunkard himself, let him rot in prison."

"Surely that were a pity; for the fellow, with all his faults, has good metal in him."

"Yes," cried the Captain, "but with a precious lot of alloy."

"*Molloy!*" ejaculated Crab emphatically.

"Did you call me?" demanded the Captain.

"No; I was thinking of Chubbs's character. He has but one vice, and he has paid dearly for it, Heaven knows; so have his poor wife and family, and they have committed no offence. I have bought his old horse Wellington, though he is of little use to any one, because I know he loves the beast, and would not have him fall into the hands of strangers. I have also requested his wife and daughters to come up and stay with us for the present at Monkwell, for we wanted some jobs done in which they can assist us; and if I were his landlord and a rich man, like Mr. Brown, I know what I would do next."

"Ah! everybody ready to give advice, if they won't give you anything else; and pray what *would* you do next?"

"I would pay the debt for which he is arrested, which is of small amount—give him back the stock and furniture on which you have already levied an execution, and try whether that unexpected and unmerited act of generosity might not effect a salutary change in his character. I have heard of such things."

"The devil you have! I never did; and I'm not going to be such an ass, and a gull, and a goose, and a gudgeon, as to try the experiment. What! reward him for being a drunkard! Pay away hard money to retain such a tenant as that! Not I. No; he has made his own bed, and I shall let him lie in it, however hard it may be. Ha, ha! had him there!"

Crab, after expressing his regret at this determination, took his leave, when Molloy fell foul of him for the foolish advice he had given, and declared that Brown would be the laughing-stock of the whole county if he followed it. The kind-hearted merchant had all along been yearning to adopt Crab's suggestions; but if there was one thing he hated more than another, it was the appearance of taking advice, of acting upon the recommendation of others, of receiving dictation, instead of following the impulses of his own free will. His was a wayward spirit, that had rather lead in a wrong direction than follow in a right one, and Molloy's opposition afforded him an oppor-

tunity of gratifying this propensity, as well as the secret wishes of his own heart.

"Laughing-stock of the whole county!" he ejaculated, working himself into a passion, as he walked rapidly up and down, by the vehement thumpings of his cane: "What care I for the whole county? Curse the whole county! don't owe a farthing to a single man Jack of 'em. Suppose I may do as I like, without their leave. Wish the whole county was in this room—ring its nose, to let it see how much I care for it. Impudent fellow, that Molloy, to fancy I should take *his* advice. Hang me if I don't drive over to Gloucester and liberate John Chubbs this very day. The Captain shall soon see that I'm not a fellow to be led by the nose."

So saying he rang the bell sharply, exclaiming, when the servant made his appearance—"John! I'm going to make a great ass of myself." Trotman bowed assentingly. "You must go immediately to Monkwell—needn't ask for Mr. Crab—but get Mrs. Chubbs and her family over as quick as you

can to Four-oak Farm, and see and make the place a bit comfortable and tidy, for I'm going to drive over to Gloucester gaol to take Farmer Chubbs out of prison." That he might not lose a moment in executing so pleasant a commission, John walked rapidly towards the door, but, taciturn as he was, he could not avoid turning round, and blurted out, while his eyes glistened, the words "God bless you, Sir!"—In an incredible short space of time his message was delivered at Monkwell, and to Crab himself, who ran to the gate imagining, from the rapidity of Trotman's approach, that some accident must have happened.

"I thought so, John," was his remark as soon as he learnt the nature of his errand; "I knew he would do it, but I didn't like to press him, for I find he would rather walk out of his road than be led into it. How lucky I bought old Wellington and the market-cart! I shall give them back to the farmer, for they're no use to me, and you shall drive them over."

Half an hour had hardly elapsed when

Mrs. Chubbs and her family were seated in the vehicle, which was furnished with refreshments of all sorts, by order of the little old-fashioned lady of Monkwell, who directed her little old-fashioned maid to draw her wheel-chair into the garden, where she put on her spectacles that she might have the better view of the party as they set off, and continued smiling and twiddling her thumbs complacently as long as the cart remained in sight. The young folks laughed and ate cakes all the way, their mother laughed and cried all the way; Trotman complaining of the dust, though there was none, repeatedly wiped his eye with the sleeve of his coat; and old Wellington, as they drew near to Four-oak Farm, pointed his ears, snuffed up the air with a triumphant neigh, and mended his pace into such a sharp trot, that they were presently reinstated in their home, and all as busy as bees in preparing for the expected return of its master.

Adam Brown, in the mean while, drove over to Gloucester gaol, where, after rating

the farmer soundly for his deplorable drunkenness, upbraiding him with his unpaid rent, and making the stone floor echo to the angry remonstrances of his cane, he told him that, for the sake of giving him one more chance in life, he came to liberate him from prison, and re-establish him in his farm. Chubbs, like many other men, though free from all superstition as to heavenly interferences in the affairs of others, was not quite so sceptical as to his own claims to divine favour. It is so flattering to be singled out for a special providence, that we easily lend ourselves to the delusion; no wonder, therefore, that the prisoner, coupling his own fate and unexpected deliverance with the similar tale which he had heard that very morning from the lips of Drunken Joe, should imagine there was something supernatural in the whole affair, and sink into a bewilderment compounded of awe and wonder. He was not easily excited, nor was he a man to make protestations and vows. Not a word did he utter on his way home; his thoughts

were too busy;—but when, on reaching the farm, he was saluted with a scream of irrepressible joy from his wife; when his dear children contended who should first embrace him; when, upon being led to the stable, Wellington instantly recognised him by a loud and joyful whinny, he turned round, fell upon the neck of his wife, and imprecated a curse upon his head if he should ever again taste any intoxicating liquor. Truth forbids us to state that this oath was taken in the exact words of the Temperance pledge. If, as we fear, it was uttered in the irreverent phraseology of an old soldier, we have only to express our hope that "the recording angel, as he wrote it down, let fall a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever." If not religiously taken, at all events it was religiously kept: and Oh! what a speedy, what a blessed change did it effect!

In two months the bells of Woodcote Church, ringing a merry peal that set every heart a-dancing, announced the marriage of Harry Groombridge and Fanny, who settled

in a pretty cottage at the distance of a few hundred yards from the mill. If the sun ever quickened his pace, he would surely have been sometimes tempted to rise before his time, that he might catch a glimpse of Fanny's happy face as she went forth at early dawn to milk her cow, or that he might listen to the bird-like carol that attested the overflowing blitheness of her heart. Farmer Chubbs himself, as well as his wife and family, was again well dressed; the Waterloo medal was once more displayed as he walked at their head to church; the farm in a very few months would hardly have been recognised for the same; and small, though regular, instalments had been paid to Brown in reduction of his debt. Chubbs was the cause, however, of more happiness to others than he himself enjoyed, for his health had been injured by his previous habits of intemperance, he felt himself to be an old man, and when he contrasted the profits and the comfort of his present course, with the many precious years wasted in drunken dissipation, his mind became em-

bittered with self-upbraidings and regrets, which, though he knew them to be vain, he found it impossible to repel.

Brown was sitting one morning in his parlour, complacently entering in his ledger the sixth of these monthly instalments, and exulting with no small pride in the success of his generous experiment, although it had partly originated in a spirit of perverse opposition, when a double letter was put into his hands bearing the London postmark. "Hallo!" he exclaimed, scrutinising the address, his invariable practice before he broke the seal; "this looks like Simon's writing! Surely the fellow wouldn't have the impudence! Think to cheat me again? No, no,—once bit, twice shy. It can't be from him;" and he turned it repeatedly round, as if he could divine its contents by the exterior; not succeeding in which, he at length broke it open, and read the following contents indited in a remarkably fair, legible, clerk-like hand:—

"92, *Great St. Helen's, City, London.*

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"MOST humbly do I beseech you to excuse the liberty I take in thus addressing you, for I am aware that I have deservedly forfeited your good opinion; but as my respect and dutiful affection towards you remain undiminished, my feelings would not allow me to commence my letter in any other way. Let me begin by solemnly assuring you that when I placed the security in your hands upon which you so kindly advanced me the £750, I firmly believed it to be as good as the Bank of England: I was dreadfully shocked when I found Hay and Simpkinson had absconded, leaving no assets behind them. It has rendered me truly miserable that I could not sooner repay the debt I owe you, although I made all sorts of efforts to do so. Fortune, I am most thankful to say, has at length crowned my exertions with success; so far at least, that I remit you enclosed, drawn to your own order, a bill upon the Gloucester bank for the sum you lent me, with the addition of

interest and compound interest to the day the bill falls due, as per statement at foot, which closes that transaction to a point.

"This payment leaves me little or nothing for my future struggles with the world; but to that I am indifferent. From the late connections I have formed in business, which are of the highest respectability, I shall always be able to maintain myself; and now that I have discharged this debt, which has always weighed heavily upon my mind, and, I hope, recovered your good opinion thereby, I shall set to work with fresh spirits. Since I last saw you I have been to Smyrna, not knowing that you had left it, where I met some of your friends, all of whom spoke of you in the highest terms. I have met with several other adventures, which I think you would like to hear. If you would kindly allow me to see you for a single day at the Manor-House, I think I could state many circumstances which might induce you to overlook my past errors, to believe that I am an altered, and, I trust, a better man, and perhaps recover for me the

good opinion which I have so unfortunately, though so deservedly forfeited. Awaiting your reply with the greatest anxiety, I am,

"My dear Uncle,

"Your dutiful and affectionate Nephew,

"SIMON HOLMES."

Unable to trust the evidence of his senses, and to believe in the good luck of thus unexpectedly recovering his £750, with interest, the merchant instantly examined the enclosed bill of exchange, which he vehemently suspected to be a forgery. "It looks like a genuine bill," he exclaimed, holding it up to the window, "but the fellow's such a confounded scamp, such a liar, played me such a rascally trick before, that—don't see what he's to get, though, by sending me a sham Abraham—drawn after date, I see—only seven days to run, including the three days' grace—not worth a farthing, though, till it's accepted. Soon settle that question. Hallo, John Trotman! order the carriage immediately—I'll go over to Gloucester myself." During the drive he repeatedly

re-perused the letter, always detecting in it some new proofs of hypocrisy, duplicity, and design, though he could not discover any immediate object for their employment; and still cherishing a latent suspicion that the whole epistle might be a hoax and its enclosure a forgery. Great, therefore, was his delight when, on reaching the banking house, the partners in which were men of known wealth, they not only assured him that it was a good and valid bill, of which they had received regular advice, but offered to pay him the amount at once in any way he might think fit—a proposition which he immediately accepted, as if to convince himself that he held a valid security. On again conning over the letter as he drove back, with the money securely lodged in his pocket-book, its tenor seemed to have undergone a marvellous transformation, and to present, in almost every line, intrinsic proofs that the writer was really what he represented himself, a changed and amended character, whom it might be well to encou rage in a new and more honourable career.

Curious are the links by which human affairs are sometimes unexpectedly chained together, singular the effects that occasionally spring from causes with which they would appear to have little or no affinity. Had not Captain Molloy, in a casual call at the Manor-House, endeavoured to dissuade Brown from liberating Chubbs, he might have been still incarcerated; had not the farmer turned out a reformed character, Brown would never have acceded to his nephew's request and have allowed him to come to Woodcote. Arguing, from the success of his recent experiment, that a similar extension of favour to Simon Holmes might be attended with results equally gratifying, he wrote to him, although in very guarded terms, granting him permission to come and stay at Woodcote for a couple of days. Exclusively of the paramount and reconciling *douceur* contained in his nephew's letter, it was cunningly worded for the attainment of his object, his uncle's curiosity being piqued to learn the nature of the adventures to which the writer

alluded, as well as to gather some tidings of his old mercantile friends at Smyrna, and of their proceedings since he had left them.

Cold and cautious as was the merchant's permission, no time was lost in its acceptance, for on the evening of the second day Simon Holmes descended from the top of the stage, that passed the gates of the Manor-House, carrying a small valise, which he deposited in the hall, when he was ushered by Trotman into the presence of his uncle, at sight of whom he was so much abashed, that he could neither raise his eyes from the ground nor advance to salute him. "Don't wonder you're confused and dumbfounded," cried Brown; "thought you'd be afraid to look me in the face—glad to see you've grace enough to be ashamed of yourself. A precious game you've been playing, and a pretty fool you have been making of yourself, haven't you?"

"I have, I have indeed," sighed the nephew, clasping his hands together; "no one can be more conscious of it, more grieved

for it than myself; but I trust, my dear uncle, that as you will have no future cause of complaint against me, I may in time recover your good opinion."

"Recover! don't know that you ever had it—not for many years past, at all events—how d'ye like that?"

"Alas! it is no more than I deserve. Most humbly do I thank you for your kindness in acceding to my request; but as you granted me permission to pay you a short visit, I hope you will spare me all further reproaches. I throw myself, dear uncle, on your mercy. You who have gone through life so honourably, so uprightly, so successfully, ought not to bear hard upon those who, not having your strength of mind or firmness of principle, have, unfortunately, yielded to temptation."

"Well, Sir, well," replied the uncle, a good deal mollified by this appeal, "if you've really and truly sowed your wild oats, and mean to become an honest man and a steady character, I won't say anything about the past. Threw away a good

chance, Sir, when you quitted my counting-house, I can tell you that. Look at me, Sir,—left Woodcote with seven and ninepence in my pocket;—rather more now, I suspect. Ha! ha!"

"Ah! had I followed your advice and your example, what a different fate would mine have been!"

"You may say that,—time enough yet —never too late to mend; but why do you stand there? Come and sit down by my side. Zooks, Sir! since you have lost the curls from your forehead, and obtained a crop of whiskers, you have become very like your poor father. Ah! it was a pity he died when you were so young."

"It was, indeed! but my mother was a far sadder loss. Had she been living I should never have gone astray. She was, indeed, the best of mothers."

"Ay, and of sisters too. Poor Mary! I was very fond of her. Methinks, Simon, you have got a look of her too. Don't find you much altered though, except that you appear a deal older; but it is a good many

years now since we met, and time soon runs up a score upon a fellow's face."

"Yes, Sir, and troubles and sorrows write down compound interest for every year that passes. Did you find my statement of the amount between us correct? The interest came to a much larger sum than I had anticipated."

"Yes, Simon, yes; it was drawn out in a very business-like manner,—does you great credit;—and I am glad to see that your handwriting is as good as ever."

"It was the happiest moment of my life, Sir, when I had scraped together money enough to make you that remittance, although it left me only a few sovereigns in my pocket."

These last words fell rather harshly upon the merchant's ear; his suspicions were quickly roused, and his searching eye was fixed upon his nephew as he exclaimed, "So! the murder's out, is it?—The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,—got nothing left—don't know what to be at, so the sinner turns saint and wishes to be

reconciled to his uncle, to see what he may get out of him. Is that it? Come, tell truth and shame the devil, and let me know at once what you expect me to do for you?"

"Nay, Sir, I expect you to grant me nothing but justice, and that, I am sure, you will not refuse me. Recollect that if I am left almost pennyless, I have the more merit in remitting the large amount which I have just paid you."

"Well, Simon, that's true, I must confess."

"Nor do I come to claim anything at your hands, except forgiveness and reconciliation. From the respectability of the mercantile connections I have formed, as mentioned to you in my letter, I have secured the means of maintenance."

"Ah, that's right, that's right, nothing like independence. I hope you'll never borrow again. For my part I have made up my mind never to lend any more money. Only prevents people from making proper exertions; does them more harm than good."

"I quite agree with you, Sir. In fact

I have nearly concluded an agreement to go out to South America as supercargo, and as that climate is unhealthy, and life always uncertain, it has been my great object to discharge my debt and to recover your good opinion before I took my departure from Europe."

"Very proper, Simon, very proper—glad to hear you talk in this way; looks as if you really meant to become a useful member of society, and to make a fortune at last, as I have done."

"Ah! Sir, it is not every one who possesses your surprising talents for business; everybody said at Smyrna that you were by far the most enlightened as well as the most successful merchant they had ever known."

"Yet there are some clever fellows at Smyrna, Simon, very clever fellows."

"Yes, Sir, and they show it by their opinion of you."

"Oh! that's all flummery, which is a thing I particularly dislike," said the merchant; but neither his looks nor his real

feelings bore out the assertion on the present occasion, for he was proud of his mercantile abilities, and tickled by this compliment from his old rivals at Smyrna, respecting whom he put numerous questions to his visitant, and became so much interested in his statements, that he remained complacently chatting with him until supper-time, becoming every minute more disposed to overlook his past misconduct in consideration of the wonderful improvement which time, knowledge of the world, and some experience of its painful vicissitudes had evidently wrought in his character.

Wild and unguarded as he might have been in his younger days, the present deportment and conversation of Simon Holmes indicated a man of steady habits, and of moral and religious sentiments; his opinions were always advanced with great humility and diffidence; his manner was deferential—some thought it sly and sneaking; the expression of his countenance was subdued and rather melancholy, as if he felt that his past errors gave him but little right to as-

sume a more confident bearing, and that he ought to be grateful for receiving notice from any quarter; his pale complexion betrayed tokens of past dissipation; he had a watchful, restless, timorous eye; he started and was thrown into manifest agitation by any sudden noise; but as his figure was good, his appearance genteel, his voice soft and insinuating, he could not be considered altogether as an unprepossessing person.

CHAPTER VII.

Brown was up and stirring at an early hour on the following morning; the tedium and inoccupation of his latter life rendered the arrival of his nephew an event of so much excitement, that it had even abridged his usual allowance of sleep, and his impatient temperament made him eager to renew the conversation from which he had derived so much pleasure on the previous night. Not that he expected his visitant, wearied, in all probability, by the fatigues of his journey, to be "stirring with the lark," like himself; but as he wished to show him his improvements in the house and grounds, he resolved to walk round his domain first, to see that everything was in

the best order. When beautifiers of mansions have exhausted the admiration of the neighbourhood, huge is their delight in showing the lions to a new victim, whose praises are ever welcome as the only interest they are likely to receive for their outlay. To the equal surprise and delight of the merchant he found, on entering his little parlour, that his nephew was already up and busily engaged with a book. "What, Simon, my boy!" he exclaimed, unconsciously resuming the familiarity of former years, "who would have expected to find you up as soon as the sun?"

"I have always been an early riser, Sir; your precept, as well as your example, gave me a habit of it in early days. Ah! what blessing would it have been had I followed them in other and more important respects!"

"Well, well, Simon, too late to think of that now; we must look forwards, not backward. Busy already! what are you reading?"

"My favourite book, Sir, since I have

studied toamend my life,—Blair's Sermo ns. I like them because, as they contain no controversial divinity, they are equally adapted to readers of every class. Anxious to guide us all towards heaven, he does not tell us that we have no chance of reaching it unless we travel in his own private and particular conveyance, nor does he denounce and anathematize us if we adopt another."

"And a sensible fellow, too. Christianity means love, not hatred."

"Very true, Sir, strikingly true. Those few words contain the very pith and marrow of theology. Are you not inclined to agree with Sir William Temple, that all those controversies which can never end, had much better never begin?"

"To be sure I am, though I never heard of Sir William. Remember a firm of Higginbotham and Temple, drysalters in Great Eastcheap—some idea they failed—kept cash at our banker's. Well, Simon, as you've read a sermon, which is all the same as saying your prayers, and the sun is shining cheerily, what say you to a walk

round the grounds before breakfast?—give you an appetite—hey?"

"Nothing I should enjoy more; I am particularly fond of a walk before breakfast, and I am all curiosity to see the house and grounds. It seems to be a most charming place." Everything that he saw in their ramble inspired the visitant with fresh admiration and delight, his especial ecstasy being reserved for the alterations and additions effected by his uncle, which he pronounced to be so manifest, as well as admirable, that he only wondered how they should have escaped the notice of former occupants. "And yet, dear uncle," he continued, but immediately checked himself, adding, after a short pause, and in a tone of humble apology, "I beg your pardon, Sir, for addressing you with so much familiarity —the phrase slipped from me inadvertently, I was thinking of former and happier days. I have no right thus to address you, for though my affectionate feelings might justify it, my conduct has been so reckless, so disreputable, so abominable——"

"Well, well, boy! can't be helped now—told you so before. What were you going to say?"

"I was about to express my surprise, Sir, that you, whose whole life has been devoted to mercantile pursuits, should evince such a marked taste in laying out grounds and embellishing a mansion."

The merchant, whose weak point had been quickly discovered by his nephew, and whose alterations of the Manor-House displayed a noble disdain of architectural consistency, shared the common infirmity of being gratified with compliments in the inverse ratio of his deserving them; but as he would not be too vain of his demerits, he meekly replied—"Why, I must confess, Simon, that I rather pique myself upon my improvements of the old house; but, after all, what *is* good taste but good sense, knowing how to set about things, and to succeed in them? If a fellow can leave Woodcote with seven and nine-pence in his pocket, and come back with a fine fortune, I should like to know what he can*not* do."

"Very true, Sir, a very just and a very striking observation."

"You talk of a man being a clever fellow because he makes a fine palace, or a fine picture, or writes a fine book, but the cleverest fellow for my money is the man who makes a fine fortune. Ha! ha! What say you to that?"

"No doubt, Sir, no doubt—the talent that doesn't enrich itself, isn't worth having."

"Better give up yours, then, Simon, if you've got any—had you there—how d'ye like it?"

"Ah! Sir," replied the nephew with a deep sigh—"you should recollect—allow me to say so once more—you should recollect how few are gifted with your own rare abilities; but I hope to improve: at all events, I have made money enough to get out of your debt, which is a good beginning."

"So it is, boy, so it is—didn't mean to hurt your feelings—dare say you'll be a rich man one of these days," said the merchant, mollified by the last remark. "Well, shall we turn in and see whether breakfast's

ready ? Famous thing for an appetite an early walk like this."

After having taken his visitant over the interior of the house, and again round the grounds, upon the plea that they looked very different when the sun was in the meridian and there were fewer shadows, the merchant became anxious to show him some of the remarkable places in the neighbourhood. Latterly he had hardly ever used the one-horse chaise, he himself not choosing to drive, the coachman being too deaf for a companion, Trotman too silent, and Walter Latimer seldom obtainable, as the hours which he could spare from attendance upon his mother were mostly devoted to Ellen Molloy.

Simon Holmes was a good whip; they took a long and pleasant drive, and on their return he was again put in requisition for anecdotes and information respecting Smyrna, the casino where the smokers and billiard-players used to assemble, the merchants and their families, the state of trade, the alteration in the entrance to the noble harbour, and other points; upon all of which he con-

versed so readily and so intelligently, that his uncle, who had latterly been suffering from a depression of spirits, mainly occasioned by a want of society and occupation, was so much charmed with his conversational powers as hardly to leave him for a single minute. A reference to the billiard-table at Smyrna suggested a game at the Manor-House. Holmes, who was a perfect master of his cue, in every sense of the word, provoked his adversary by beating him at the beginning of the game, and then suffered him unexpectedly to win—a result which converted his previous mortification into a jubilant delight and cackling triumph.

"I cannot understand it," exclaimed the nephew, assuming in his turn an air of great vexation—"I used to be deemed a capital player. You must have practised all day long."

"Not I, boy—not I—hardly ever play. Come, let's have another game, and I'll give you two." The merchant was still a winner—he gave him four, with the same result; declaring, when they left off, that his adversary was a capital player, that he should be happy

to offer him his revenge next day. Holmes played chess, and backgammon, and cribbage, and all sorts of dual games; he read the Public Ledger newspaper aloud, commenting upon the mercantile intelligence, and the prices of stocks, and the sales by auction, with the acuteness of one who evidently understood what he was discussing; and when these resources failed, he crept into his uncle's heart of hearts by accompanying him to the house-top, where they would sit together for hours, enjoying the unsociable sociality of smoking. In short, he kept Brown so constantly employed and amused, that at the expiration of the two days, which seemed to have flitted away with an unaccountable rapidity, he would not listen when he hinted that the term for which he had been invited had expired, and that he was prepared, however reluctantly, to take his departure.

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense!" was the reply. "No hurry, boy—very well as you are:—make it a week—make it a week—hardly spoken to you yet—hate fellows to be all hurry skurry, splash dash. Shan't let you

go; that's one word for all." With many expressions of humble gratitude the nephew signified his acquiescence in this mandate, devoting himself so successfully, during the remainder of the term, to the great object of ingratiating himself with his uncle, that the latter vehemently insisted upon his extending his visit to a month. Knowing from former experience that opposition and difficulty only increased the merchant's eagerness and obstinacy, the wily visitant now made various objections to the proposal, urging his conditional engagement to go out to South America as a supercargo—as well as the flattering prospects that would be thus opened to him of forming the most advantageous connections, and redeeming the time he had lost; always testifying fresh gratitude, and expressing the most profound regret that this sense of duty would not allow him to obey the ardent dictates of his heart by remaining at the Manor-House. Throwing cold water upon the proposition, like a similar process upon unslaked lime, only made Brown fume up with a new heat, and gave

additional stringency to his resolves—a result which had been clearly foreseen.

At his uncle's request, or rather, by his positive command, Holmes gave up the contemplated supercargoship, profitable as it must have proved according to his own assertions, and thus established something like a claim for his future provision, or the procurement of an equally advantageous appointment. This was a plea that he found no occasion to urge; it was anticipated by the merchant, who, whenever he talked of taking his departure and no longer obtruding upon his kindness and hospitality, checked him by exclaiming—"Nonsense, my dear Simon, nonsense. As I made you give up your engagement, you must stay here —nay, you *shall*—till I can find something else equally good—not going to fob you off in that way—not the fellow to do a shabby thing." With the most ardent acknowledgments, mingled with a coy reluctancy, and allusions to the fine opening which South America would have presented to him, and fears that he was wearing out his wel-

come, and abusing his dear uncle's generous hospitality, did Holmes obey these welcome orders, omitting no art of cozenage, flattery, or ingratiation that might obtain for him a permanent settlement in the Manor-House by cajoling its proprietor. Nor was he less solicitous to insinuate himself in other directions, and to win "golden opinions from all sorts of people," an object in which he was well qualified to succeed by his general intelligence, as well as by his subdued, quiet, and deferential manner. With Mr. Penfold, the clergyman, he soon became a special favourite, being not only a regular attendant at morning and evening service, but being frequently encountered in the field immediately adjoining the parsonage with a volume of Blair's Sermons in his hand, upon which occasions he never failed to declare how much he had been delighted, and, he did humbly trust, benefited too by the admirable sermon he had heard last Sunday.

Smooth and successful as had hitherto been his career at Woodcote, an event occurred one morning which for a moment

threatened to subvert all his manœuvres and machinations. Just as he was preparing to go out and join his uncle in the grounds, he was informed by Trotman that a lady wished to speak with him, who declined giving her name, or coming up stairs. "A lady! with me!" he exclaimed, while the colour rushed to his pale face, and his restless eye glanced suspiciously round the room—"Who is she? what is she like?"

"A stranger—what she shouldn't be," was the laconic reply to both questions. Holmes hurried immediately down stairs, waiting, however, until the servant had disappeared before he opened the dining-room door, which he carefully closed when he had entered, exclaiming in a voice of suppressed rage, to a woman whose brazen looks and vulgar finery abundantly justified Trotman's description, "*You* here! Curse your impudence! how dare you ferret me out and follow me in this manner?"

"Curse *you!*" replied the woman, "for a pitiful, sneaking rascal as you are, and

always have been. Do you mean to desert me and fob me off in this manner?"

"Fob you off! Have I not made you rich? have I not given you more than your fair share of the plunder, and did you not promise me to return to Scotland?"

"Ay, you gull, but I didn't say when. The money's all gone, and I must have more."

"I have none to give you, and if I had I wouldn't fork out another pound."

"You won't! then by——I'll blow the gaff upon you—peach—pull you up and spoil your sport, whatever it may be. What! do you forget, my fine fellow, that you are in my power; that I can transport you—ay, and it's my belief, can hang you if I choose!"

"Hush, hush! don't speak so loud, for Heaven's sake; you may be overheard."

"Oho!" laughed the woman, with a look of malignant triumph; "you are afraid o what I say here, are you? I'll give you a devilish deal more to be afraid of, if I bring you into a court of justice!"

"Let me tell you once more, Margaret, as I have already told you a thousand times, that you are in my power, not I in yours. *I* have never committed forgery—*I* have never been guilty of perjury and fraud—*I* have never——"

"Who did I do it for, you skulking sneaker!" interposed the woman; "Who put me up to it? who got the plunder, but yourself?"

"Only a part; only a small part. I had many others to pay besides you, and your haul was no trifle, whatever you may have done with it."

"That's no odds—I must have more—I want twenty pounds directly, and twenty pounds I'll have before ever I quit this house. I may be in your power *now*, but what if I turn king's evidence?"

"You're not such a fool, Margaret! You'll only ruin yourself; you can't bring any thing home to me; I've been too cunning for you. But if I give you this twenty pounds, will you swear to return to Scotland within a week?"

"Ay, ay! I swear it, for I believe I had better get out of the way. Out with the flimsies or the shiners, I don't care which, and I'll be off in a jiffey." Drawing a small case from his fob, he took out a twenty-pound note, which his unwelcome visitant, after holding it up to the window, and minutely examining, thrust into her pocket, while her companion whispered in her ear, "Remember what you have just sworn, and remember also that you are in my power!"

"Gammon! King's evidence!" was the sneering reply when she quitted the room, followed, until she had left the gates, by the fixed and terrified eye of her accomplice, upon whom the effects of this alarming interview were painfully manifest: a paleness more than usually wan and ashy had succeeded to the momentary redness that had overspread his features; the perspiration stood upon his forehead, and his limbs shook with involuntary twitches: but he calmed himself after a short delay, and proceeding to his uncle in the grounds, said with a forced composure, "I have just had an

unexpected visit from the wife of an old acquaintance, who is most anxious to obtain the valuable supercargoship which I have resigned, and I have promised to use my influence in his favour. He has been a sad wild fellow, and his wife, I fear, was a woman of doubtful character; but Heaven knows, an offender like myself has little right to sit in judgment upon others. He is reformed now, and I shall be happy if I can procure him so excellent an appointment."

"All right, Simon, all right. Those who have glass windows mustn't throw stones. Never too late to mend, as *you* can prove. Your feelings do you credit. This long stroll has given me an appetite. Come, shall we turn in and take luncheon?" Just as they were commencing their repast, the merchant suddenly exclaimed, while he gazed from the window, "Zooks! who's this, I wonder, staring through the gates? Not going to come in, is she? What an overdressed, bold-looking hussy!" Startled and alarmed, his companion jumped from his chair, and beheld the female from whom he

had so recently parted, gazing at the house as if she meant to return—a sight which sent him trembling back to his seat, where he attempted to proceed hastily with his meal, although his nervous agitation rendered him evidently unconscious of his own actions.

"Hallo, boy! what the deuce are you at?" demanded his uncle; "you're pouring vinegar over the cold apple-pie; and now you're putting mustard into your wine!"

"Am I?" said Holmes, peppering the salt-cellar with much eagerness; "I was thinking——"

"Call this thinking? Don't look a bit like it. Oh! that strange creature has gone away—not coming in, I see. But, Simon, what on earth has sent your wits a woolgathering in this way?"

"My thoughts have indeed been wandering," replied the nephew, somewhat reassured by the departure of that fearful woman; "the person whom you saw at the gate was the wife of my unfortunate friend, the party of whom I have just been speaking, and I was completely overcome by the

thought that so gifted and so good a fellow, though he has been a sad rake, should be tied for life to such a disreputable, low-lived companion."

"Poor fellow! bad job, certainly; but don't see, master Simon, why you should spoil my nice apple-pie for all that. Take vinegar with your own, if you like; no accounting for tastes, but I prefer sugar."

Although by this ready invention Holmes had adroitly managed to avoid all immediate suspicion, the visit, haunting him with a thousand vague apprehensions, made him doubly anxious for the speedy accomplishment of his designs.

Well aware that constant occupation was the great desideratum for the active mind of his uncle, he not only took care to supply him with the various resources and amusements to which allusion has already been made, but prevailed upon him to commence farming on a small scale, a pursuit which immediately recommended itself to his favour, by recalling his old habits of traffic, as well as by its promise (but not its reali-

sation) of eventual profit. He made bargains in cattle and horses; he was out early in the morning looking after his stock and his labourers; at night he was busily engaged in posting up the new accounts he had opened in his ledger; the result of which personal and mental activity was a speedy restoration of the health and spirits, which had been suffering from stagnation. His improvement in these respects was attributed to the magical presence of his nephew, and in proportion as he believed himself to have been benefited as well as delighted by his society, was he reluctant to contemplate his departure. He cast his views forward: he was an old man, subject to asthmatic attacks; he wanted a companion for his declining years;—he had quarrelled with Allan Latimer and his brother;—there was at present no claimant for the fine fortune which he had so laboriously built up—to whom ought he, to whom could he leave it, unless to his only near relative—the only child of his only sister? He was of an impetuous tempera-

ment, and hated long deliberations, so that after perpending these matters in his mind for a little while, he announced to Holmes himself, and to their friends in the neighbourhood, his intention of making him his sole heir, provided he took the name of Brown, resided always at the Manor-House, and continued to conduct himself with the undeviating propriety that had marked his recent life.

Great and immediate was the sensation excited in Woodcote and throughout its vicinity by this declaration; a fact of which no one was rendered more pointedly cognizant than the heir himself, who was now saluted with cap-in-hand reverence by the rustics as "the young Squire," while those of a better grade assumed a much more smiling and deferential manner when they encountered him. Nay, several families who had hitherto kept aloof from calling at the Manor-House, especially those where there were managing mammas, now sought occasion for doing so, justly observing that to visit a vulgar old merchant was a differ-

ent, a very different thing from making acquaintance with such an accomplished and gentlemanly young man as Mr. Holmes. The object of these sudden advances saw and perfectly well understood their meaning, but it altered not his deportment: he was still meek, humble, demure as ever; ingratiating himself even with those whose interests were the most likely to be compromised by his unexpected appearance at Woodcote.

"It seems as if all my hopes in this world were destined to be frustrated," said Mrs. Latimer with a sigh, as she plied her needle, while Walter sat drawing by her side. "And yet I am very wicked and ungrateful to say so," she added after a moment's pause, "for I'm sure I have more blessings than most people, more, I fear, than I deserve, with all the comforts of life about me, and two such sons as I do verily believe no mother ever had before." Her fingers ceased their motion, and her eyes were affectionately fixed upon Walter until they began to glisten, when she resumed both her work and her

remarks. "And yet it *is* hard and disappointing, isn't it, after Mr. Brown had as good as promised to make dear Allan his heir, and had said so much about the debt of gratitude he owed to your poor father, which is all true enough, and Allan had done nothing in the world to offend him; to find that he is not to get a shilling after all, nor you either, I suppose? What they quarrelled about I could never make out, but Mr. Brown is wayward and touchy, and Allan, dear boy, has sometimes such hasty ways with him, that I suppose—well, there's no knowing, but I believe everything's for the best."

"You may be sure of one thing, mother, that Allan never gave him, nor any one else, the smallest just ground of offence."

"Of that I am sure as I am of my own existence. I was in hopes that his absence would prevent any further bickerings, and reconcile Mr. Brown, and that's one reason why I have never pressed his return home; but then, to be sure, I never dreamt of this Mr. Holmes turning up, and being taken

into such sudden favour, and made his heir, after all the hard names that he used to call him."

"Whatever he might have been formerly, his present conduct is irreproachable; he seems to be thoroughly reformed. We are already upon intimate terms: I like him much; and I think we shall find him a very agreeable neighbour."

"Well, I hope we may. He certainly seems a nice young man, and after all he is Mr. Brown's own flesh and blood—his sister's only child—so that it's very natural, you know, and one cannot wonder; and yet, considering your poor father's services, one cannot help wishing——"

"What, mother?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Mr. Brown has been very good to us already, and I am most thankful for all his past favours."

"We are not likely, I suspect, to receive any more; I do not see any reason, therefore, for longer deferring my marriage with Ellen, which, from your great apprehension that it might offend him, I have so long con-

sented to postpone. I am in treaty, as you know, with another exporting manufacturer at Gloucester, who wants a superintendant and corresponding clerk; and if I obtain the situation, I shall be well enabled to support a wife, without encroaching upon your comforts, which has hitherto been my great fear as well as Ellen's."

"My dear boy! I wish you would think more of yourself and less of me. It was on your account and Allan's that I was fearful of offending Mr. Brown, but now I don't see why you should any longer delay your marriage, especially if you get this appointment at Gloucester, and I will live with you wherever you settle; and, please God! Allan shall come back to us, and we will all be as happy together as the day is long, though we may not be as rich as some of our neighbours."

"And thus we may be gainers after all, dear mother, by losing Mr. Brown's fortune. *I* shall, for one, at all events, and I will immediately set off for Gloucester to see whether I cannot close the negotiation at once."

"Do, my dear boy! and may God bless and prosper you, wherever you go!"

Captain Molloy was busily employed in repairing and cleaning a double-barrelled gun, which he had taken to pieces for the purpose, while a lean spaniel, squatted on its haunches, intently watched the process, with an occasional snappish whine, as if impatient for its completion, and the commencement of sport. Matilda, seated at the window, so that she could render herself visible to any passing wayfarer whom she might wish to intercept, was occupied in adjusting some showy feathers to a straw hat which, in conjunction with her flaunting new pelisse, was destined to astound the congregation on the following Sunday: Ellen sat in one corner of the room with her guitar, humming to herself some tender stanzas which Walter had addressed to her, when her father exclaimed: "Well, girls! you hav'n't told me yet which of you is to set her cap at the young squire. *By* the powers! that chap is now one of the greatest catches in the county—Brown's own nephew

—his only relation—his acknowledged heir —ay, and won't have long to wait, I reckon; for the old boy was uncommonly rickety and wheezy last time I called at the Manor-House. 'Tilda, you sly jade! is that dashing hat meant to help you in the conquest? Oh! it's you, then, is it, who are to win the prize?"

"That remains to be seen; but Ellen, you know, is entirely out of the question."

"Out of the question! How so?"

"Why, my dear Papa! if you don't know it already, I think it is high time you should; she is engaged to Walter Latimer. Come, come, Ellen! don't sit there blushing and panting as if you were ashamed of yourself; you have done nothing wrong, so tell Papa all about it." With much confusion, and blushing, intermingled with tears, Ellen related the conditional contract she had made with Walter, adding that neither party wished the marriage to be solemnized unless he should succeed in procuring the employment for which he was then negotiating; and concluding with an

impassioned appeal to her father to give his sanction to their nuptials. With all his faults, Molloy loved his children; circumstances known at this moment only to himself, but which were soon destined to transpire, threatened to compel his departure from Woodcote, and perhaps to render a trip to some foreign country highly expedient; recollecting all which contingencies, he kissed Ellen with much affection, gave a ready consent to her union whenever she herself might think it right, pronounced Walter to be as good and kind-hearted a fellow as ever lived, and wished her all sorts of happiness with the man of her choice. Hiding her head in his bosom, poor Ellen wept those delightful tears which are so much more expressive of gratitude than the most fervent eloquence, cordially embraced her sister in return for her congratulations, and hurried off to communicate what had occurred to her lover, and to learn whether he had received any fresh intelligence from Gloucester.

"'Tilda, dear!" said the father, as soon as

her sister had disappeared; "this is a fortunate affair,—comes in the very nick of time,—more so than I can explain to you just now;—and I'd wish the marriage to take place with as little delay as may be. Ah! my dear girl! if you could only succeed in hooking the young Squire, and there's little time to be lost, I can tell you that,—if I could only see you and Ellen married—*by* the powers! I wouldn't care a rap what became of myself. I'd be over the water in a jiffey. As an old soldier, I have been used to rough it, and can fight my own battles anywhere."

Prompted by these significant hints, which filled her with the more apprehension from their undefined nature, Matilda enacted over again all the wiles, and schemes, and allurements she had practised upon Allan Latimer, always excepting the summer-house trick, of which she had become too heartily ashamed to attempt its repetition: but she had to deal with a much more wary character—with one who, quickly penetrating her motives, found no difficulty in baffling

her devices, and was totally unmoved by her enticements. Her forwardness only gave additional attraction to the modest and retiring manners of Ellen, whose charms and accomplishments had already made as much impression upon Holmes as his heart was calculated to receive. For reasons of his own, he was anxious to take a wife from Woodcote, from among the acquaintance of his uncle; and finding that he always spoke in more flattering terms of Ellen Molloy than of any one else, he submitted his wishes to him, and asked his permission to pay her his addresses, taking special care to state that he had never spoken to her upon the subject, and would instantly abandon his intentions if they did not meet with his entire concurrence.

"Ods bobs!" exclaimed the uncle, in no small surprise; "this is a sudden affair, Simon. Why, you can hardly have seen enough of the girl to know your own mind yet."

"Your favourable mention of her, my dear uncle, has induced me to be more often

in her society than you may perhaps imagine."

"Ah! you sly dog!"

"That epithet does not apply to me, I can assure you. Alas! throughout my whole life I have been only too open, too unreserved, and have thus often exposed myself to censures which a more crafty man would have escaped. I have said nothing, done nothing that can in the smallest degree compromise her or myself. I defer everything to you; your will is mine. I should be the most ungrateful of wretches if I did not always make it so. In fact you are in some degree responsible for the attachment I have formed."

"The deuce I am! How so?"

"Your praises of her conduct and character first turned my attention towards Ellen;—you have known and observed her much longer than myself, and I never in my whole life knew you to be once mistaken in your judgment."

"Well, there's something in that; and I do believe she's as good a girl as ever lived;

but, zooks, boy! why must you marry any one? Look at me. *I* never married, and though I am now more than twice your age, I don't feel a bit more inclined to marry than I did when I was a youngster."

"Mine has been a roaming life, you know; I have acquired a habit of rambling from one place to another, and if I seek to marry now, it is that I may not run away from Woodcote, that I may become settled, and devote the remainder of my life to my dear uncle."

"Run away from Woodcote, boy! Mustn't talk of it—can't spare you, and won't. If you've taken a fancy to Ellen, you've my consent, therefore, to woo and win her; but, as I am always ready to play a game of billiards with you, or toddle down to the farm when you wish it, I can't see what on earth you want with a wife. At all events *I* never married. Ha! ha!"

Few as had been the interviews between Holmes and Ellen Molloy, he had seen enough to satisfy him that he did not stand very high in her favour, and that his

chances of success must depend more upon her father's exertion of authority than his own powers of ingratiation. Betaking himself, therefore, in the first instance to the Captain, he requested permission to pay his addresses to his youngest daughter, adding that his uncle approved his choice, and gave his full consent to the measure. "Permission, my dear fellow!" cried the delighted father, jumping up and vehemently shaking his hand; "to be sure I will, and more too;—I'll promise that you shall have her. Faith and troth! any girl in the country might jump mast high to catch such an offer, for your uncle's fine fortune and the Manor-House estate are not to be sneezed at. But was it the youngest you said? Was it Ellen? Are you quite clear that you mean Ellen?" demanded the father, who had just then recollected her engagement with Walter.

"To be sure I am;—upon such a subject one is not likely to make a mistake."

"Egad! I don't know that. If you're not an obstinate fellow, Holmes, when

you've once taken up an idea—and I don't think you are;—if you're not particular, I mean foolishly particular,—if it wouldn't make any difference to you,—if it was all the same thing,—*couldn't* you say the eldest instead of the youngest? 'Tilda instead of Ellen?"

"Quite impossible, Captain!"

"Why so? it's all out of the same family, you know,—only one sister instead of t'other, which can't make any great odds, I should think. *By* the powers! 'Tilda's the finest girl in Gloucestershire! You've never seen her ride,—nor dance,—nor play upon the harp. Between ourselves, Holmes,"—and here the speaker lowered his voice to a confidential whisper,—"I rather think, you lucky dog! that you've made a strong impression in that quarter,—that is, if I can read eyes and sighs, and all that sort of thing. Poor 'Tilda!"

"My mind is quite made up, Captain. Give me your consent for Ellen, or I will make my bow at once."

"Bless us and save us! How positive

you are about such a trifle! Well, if you must have Ellen, you must, and a charming girl she is; and I give you my consent, my dear boy, with the greatest pleasure in life."

Holmes took his leave, and Molloy, hoping to conquer Ellen's anticipated scruples by blazoning the advantages and grandeur of the proposed alliance, hastened to find her. Swinging forward with an elastic step, carolling a merry song, making his rattan whiz through the air as he performed the sword exercise, and affecting an extravagant delight, he shouted out as he approached her, "Hurra! hurra! give you joy, Ellen! here's news, grand news! Come and kiss me, my dear girl, and you shall hear it all." After which exordium he proceeded to relate the conversation he had held with Holmes, dwelling particularly on the previous sanction obtained from Brown, and painting in glowing colours the immense advantages that would accrue to herself and all her family from so splendid an alliance.

"I have not interrupted you, papa," panted Ellen when he had concluded,

"because I have really been unable to speak, and I could not believe that I rightly understood what you were saying. Can it be possible that you have forgotten my engagement with Walter Latimer, and the betrothal to which you so recently gave your sanction?"

"Tush! my dear Ellen! that was under different circumstances—totally different—quite another thing. Holmes hadn't then come forward; a girl may always change her mind, as I told you once before—hundreds do so every day; nobody expects these idle love-promises to be kept. Surely you wouldn't throw yourself away upon a beggar, when you may, by marrying such a nice young fellow as Holmes, secure old Brown's large fortune and the Manor-House estate!"

Ellen was gentle, meek, usually acquiescent, and never excited to vehemence; but under this placid exterior there were deep feeling, inflexible firmness, and a profound sense of honour and rectitude. She said little, for she was not a person of many

words, and she was restrained by respect for her father; but her calm, decided, emphatic rejection of the proffered suit showed how indignant she was at the very thought of sacrificing Walter to any rival, however flattering might be his prospects. Foiled in this direction, her father next attempted to work upon her fears and feelings, by stating his own desperate circumstances, and hinting at an ugly exposure with which he was threatened, and which might throw the whole family so completely out of society as to compel their removal from Woodcote, and perhaps from England.

"If we are threatened with calamities," was the reply, "never, never will I believe that they can be averted by treachery and falsehood. No, I will walk in the straight path—I will do what truth and honour require; and then, if sorrows and troubles overtake us, I shall find a support and consolation in exclaiming—God's will be done!"

Provoked at what he termed her unaccountable perverseness, and believing that

so mild and meek a girl, though she would not be persuaded or cajoled, might easily be intimidated, her father now had recourse to angry menaces, declaring that all her objections were frivolous and disobedient, that the safety of the whole family depended upon her union with Holmes, and adding with an oath that he would compel her to marry him whether she liked it or not.

Ellen wept bitterly when he left her, for she had never before incurred the serious displeasure of her father; but as she would not suffer his threats any more than his entreaties to make her swerve from a decision which she felt to be right, she presently dried her tears, walked over to Mrs. Latimer's cottage, and related to her and Walter the distressing interview that had just occurred, asking their joint advice how she should act. "How you should act, dearest Ellen!" exclaimed the latter; "can there be a moment's doubt upon the subject? By Heaven! I am glad it has come to this, for I shall now claim the performance of your vow."

"What vow?" inquired Ellen in a faint voice.

"Do you not remember the solemn promise you made me in the Shaw Lane, that, if any attempt were made to force your inclinations, you would immediately consent to our marriage?"

"That agreement had reference to Mr. Cavendish."

"Nay, nay, you shall not escape me thus. It had reference to your peace of mind,—to your rescue from an uncomfortable home, from coercion and intimidation, which are quite as urgent and imminent now, if not more so, than they were then. How say you, mother? don't you think Ellen's former pledge is binding upon her in this case of Holmes?"

"I must give a verdict against you, my sweet girl, I must indeed," smiled the mother.

"And look, dear Ellen!" resumed the lover; "it seems as if Heaven itself were propitious to our union without further delay, for here is a letter I have just re-

ceived from Gloucester, securing to me the situation for which I had applied, although the parties will not be ready to receive me for a few weeks. That will just give time for our wedding. How very fortunate!" The mother's solicitations were now added to those of her son; Ellen, superior to all affectation of prudery, and compelled to admit that her pledge was binding in spirit if not in the letter, consented to marry without awaiting the sanction of her father; the compact was ratified by mutual embraces, and it was agreed that it should be carried into effect with the least possible delay. At the suggestion of Ellen it was further resolved to take Matilda into their confidence; and a trusty as well as invaluable ally she proved, entering heartily into their plans, and forwarding all the preliminary arrangements with so much zeal and activity that everything was soon in readiness. On the evening previous to the day on which the marriage was to be solemnized, the happy pair were sitting in the alcove of Mrs. Latimer's garden, discussing their future

plans, and enjoying that exchange of perfect confidence and intercommunion of soul which is the sweet privilege of affianced lovers, when the maid brought a letter to Walter, which he had no sooner perused than he ejaculated, "Gracious Heaven! Allan is in prison!"

"In prison!" echoed Ellen.

"Yes—Crevetti writes me word that he has been arrested for debt, and urges me to set off instantly for London that I may assist in procuring his liberation. But read —read it yourself. Poor Allan! he is the last person I should have thought likely to— How very unfortunate! What—what is to be done?"

"There is but one course to pursue. You must hurry up to London immediately."

"But our wedding, dear Ellen—it is fixed for to-morrow."

"I know it; but could you expect it to be blessed if you were to leave your brother languishing in prison, that you might proceed to the marriage altar?"

"Oh no, no, no!"

"Do you think that, with this sad misfortune weighing upon my heart, I could enjoy a moment's happiness during our honeymoon?"

"I'm sure *I* couldn't, dear Ellen; the thought of Allan's imprisonment would make me miserable."

"Then our marriage must be deferred for the present. It will be all the merrier after you have effected his liberation."

"True—true; and that will be soon, I trust. I will hasten up to town by the very first coach."

"Do, dear Walter! and God speed you on your pious errand!"

At an early hour of the following morning the pensive lover, instead of hastening to the church, as he had anticipated, to receive the hand of his mistress, was whirling along the dusty road, on the outside of one of the London stages.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two days after Isola had left London, Crevetti returned to it, his hand completely restored to its functions, and his general health much benefited by his residence at the sea-side. His reappearance was serviceable to Allan, who, since the departureof the fascinating Italian—a privation which seemed to be like removing the sun from his moral hemisphere—had sunk into a total prostration of spirits. From this lethargy he was compelled to rouse himself, in order to settle with Crevetti, and make arrangements respecting his pupils,—a great proportion of whom, attracted by the captivating manners and appearance of the younger master, wished to make him a permanent substitute for their old one. Too

honourable to listen to any such proposals, he insisted upon the reinstatement of the friend for whom he had acted; and in order to silence every objection and afford perfect satisfaction to Crevetti, whose jealousy was aroused by these symptoms of defection, he announced his resolution of giving up teaching, and of abandoning music altogether as a profession. This sacrifice he had the less hesitation in making as he believed that the additional and much more welcome exertions of his pen would always supply him with the means of subsistence on a moderate scale.

A very short experience served to dispel this illusion. The new editor of the periodical to which he had hitherto contributed had literary friends of his own, to whom he wished to give a preference; other publications of a similar nature could afford no opening for his effusions; the booksellers with whom he had made acquaintance recommended a work of fiction in three volumes, which he commenced without loss of time, only to approximate to the situation

of the horse in the adage, while the grass was growing. Short indeed was the time ere he made the painful discovery that literature, though a good assistant, is a bad supporter,—that it is a serviceable walking-stick, but by no means a trustworthy crutch.

The horse which he had purchased for the sole purpose of accompanying Isola in her rides had already been sold, but, owing to an injury accidentally received in the stable, it produced scarcely a fourth of its cost. Allan was sanguine; he might miscalculate his resources, and act upon the erroneous estimate thus formed; but he was not wilfully improvident—far from it; and he had no sooner learnt the precarious nature of the supplies upon which he had hitherto depended, than he commenced a rigid system of retrenchment. His supper-parties were discontinued; he made no more purchases; he sent a portion of his water-colour drawings to an auctioneer to be disposed of by public sale, only to learn that, so long as a man goes on buying, however inadequate may be his means, he has a

chance of maintaining his credit, but that the moment he begins selling he becomes an object of distrust.

Many circumstances had combined to obtain for him a larger share of credit than he had ever been entitled to receive, some of the tradesmen really believing that he was the brother of the celebrated singer, the money-making Italian—others that he was her lover, and might at any time command her purse. To them the departure of Isola was equivalent to the removal of Fortunatus's cap from his head, and they began to watch his proceedings with much suspicion, especially when they found, from his altered style of living, that they had little more to gain by trusting him. In other and higher quarters, among his more immediate associates and acquaintance, Allan began to observe a marked difference of demeanour. Isola's friendship, and the enchantment that she threw around his parties, giving him a temporary vogue in a certain coterie, had occasioned him to be sought by many who, now that these attractions had ceased, were

not sorry to drop an acquaintance from which nothing further was to be gained. Others kept aloof from the apprehension that the economising stage of his life would soon lead to the borrowing one; and though there were among his associates several exceptions to these selfish and pitiful defaulters, —several who were too generous to treat him with coldness, or even with any visible diminution of cordiality,—he could not help suspecting that all shared the same feeling, and that he occupied a totally different and much inferior position in society, now that his means were circumscribed and that he had lost the fair magnet by whom his visitants had been chiefly attracted. These humbling convictions were succeeded by an attack of illness, which incapacitated him from struggling with the pecuniary embarrassments now beginning to gather round him.

During this melancholy period of confinement and indisposition he had ample leisure to review his past life,—a retrospect which, in the first instance, prompted him to complain

of the hardship of his lot. "Surely," he thought, "mine has been a cruel fate,—may I not say an unmerited one? for I cannot charge myself with any wilful misconduct. Twice have I been unfortunate in my attachments. Without any offence of which I am aware I have been compelled to withdraw from Woodcote. I have lost the friendship of Mr. Brown, and all prospect of his future favour. I come to London,—I am blessed for a short time with the society of Isola,—I become passionately attached to her, only to feel the more keenly the bitter and the lasting pang of losing her. I obtain abundant credit, which is equivalent to the command of wealth—I am surrounded, like Tantalus, with a thousand temptations—I can safely say that I have not indulged in one low, or grovelling, or sensual vice,—and yet I am beset with difficulties, tormented with duns, threatened with arrest!"

In pronouncing a verdict between themselves and fate, how few men are impartial! Allan's judgment had been momentarily warped by his self-love; but he was too

clear-headed, too upright, too stern in his integrity, to pronounce a deliberate sentence of acquittal where he felt that justice demanded condemnation, and, after a short communing with himself, he thus pursued his cogitations:—"No; I cannot lay that flattering unction to my soul. I cannot adopt the inconsiderate expression of Burns, and exclaim, 'And yet the light that led astray was light from heaven:' nor can I claim the merit of that patient self-denial which is always combating its own desires, and always comes off victorious. True, I have indulged only in the luxuries of the heart and of the intellect; I have yielded only to the temptations of literature, art, and science—to the enticements of high and polished civilization—to those refinements of social urbanity which are only to be enjoyed in such a metropolis as London; but if my circumstances forbade these gratifications, pure and exalted as they were—if I have purchased them with the property of others, which I must have done to be so much in debt—they may not less justly upbraid me than if I had wasted

it in low riot and debauchery. For an honest man it is not sufficient to conquer solicitations to undue expenses on the evil side of his nature; he must equally resist those that tempt his noblest feelings, his love of the fine arts, of enlightened society, of all that is high and hallowing. These he may admire and reverence, but if they are beyond his means he should not attempt their possession. I feel that I have been improvident, and I am well aware that I must shortly incur the penalty of my thoughtless ness."

This prophecy was speedily verified. An execution was placed in his apartments, and on the following day he was arrested by the holder of an unpaid note of hand which he had given in payment of a drawing. The officer intrusted with the writ proved to be the same from whose house in Cursitor-street he had formerly made his escape; and as he refused again to be accountable for one whom he designated as "a slippery leg-bail customer," he delivered him at once into the Fleet Prison. Still more sick at heart

than in body, the disconsolate Allan knew not to what quarter he might betake himself for advice or assistance. Isola was no longer in England; Harry Freeman, to whom he had been so much indebted on a previous occasion, had accepted an invitation to perform the parts of chief mate and Merry Andrew on board a yacht, for he was an admirable sailor, and was at that moment cruising off Cadiz:—among all his acquaintance there was not one to whom he could bring himself to disclose his humiliating situation except Crevetti, who hastened to him the very moment he learnt his misfortune, and most cordially proffered every assistance in his power. Without waiting for Allan's concurrence, he wrote to Walter at Woodcote, and then busied himself in ascertaining the probable value of the assets, and the amount of the various claims, with a view to their ultimate liquidation.

Upon his arrival in London, the wonders and the magnificence of which were all unnoticed as he drove along, so completely was his mind absorbed by the mournful

errand upon which he came, Walter jumped into a hackney cabriolet, was driven to the Fleet Prison, and led to the narrow room, or rather closet, in which Allan was immured. Melancholy as was the place of meeting, the brothers rushed into each other's arms with such delight that for a moment everything was forgotten except the joy of their interview. Walter's countenance, however, quickly changed as he gazed upon the face of the prisoner, and exclaimed, "Good Heavens! Allan, how much you are altered! how pale you look! We must get you out of this horrid place without a moment's delay." And then, making not a single allusion to the mode in which the debts had been contracted, he inquired their amount.

"It is large enough to make me blush with shame," was the reply, "and yet not so much as I had feared. Crevetti, who has been indefatigable in his friendly exertions, has had my assets appraised by a broker, and has made out a list of the claims upon me; here it is. The balance against

me, you see, is not very heavy—yet it is, considering my circumstances. I will not attempt to palliate my extravagance. I have no defence to offer."

"What, Allan! is this all? Why, the whole is quite within our means. It is less, much less, than the amount of the stock standing in our joint names. Why did you not send me down a power of attorney to sell it?"

"Because only half of it is mine;—because I was determined not to encroach upon a fund the interest of which is absolutely necessary for the expenses at Woodcote, and for the comfort of our dear mother."

"But I have procured a situation at Gloucester which will enable me to appropriate to those objects more than we shall now want to subtract from our joint stock."

"On reflection, Walter, I admit that my creditors have a fair claim upon my own moiety; but yours I will not touch."

"Dear Allan! I only ask you to be just. If the cases were reversed,—if I were in debt and in prison,—what would you do for me?"

"Give you every shilling I had in the world," ejaculated Allan with tears in his eyes.

"And how would you feel if I were to refuse your proffered assistance? Come, come, Allan! of all the days in the year, you must not disoblige me to-day. I was to have been married this morning!" He then related all that had taken place between himself and Ellen, and the abrupt deferment of their nuptials occasioned by the receipt of Crevetti's letter. "What a wretch I am!" groaned Allan, "thus to have marred your happiness."

"It is not marred,—you have protracted only to increase it. It is customary, you know, for relations to make wedding presents to one another. Well, you shall anticipate yours,—you shall this day make me the most acceptable of all presents, by giving me the pleasure, the delight of assisting to set you at liberty." Allan, melting into tears, and too much affected to be able to speak, tenderly embraced his brother; and Walter, taking his silence for

consent, hurried out of the room, declaring that he would fly instantly to Crevetti, to claim his assistance in selling the stock and making arrangements for liquidating every debt. These measures were speedily accomplished, for the old Italian, who was sincerely attached to Allan, never rested till he was released from the prison, after which he accompanied the brothers to the coach-office, and stood by the side of the vehicle snapping his fingers with delight, and uttering incessant Anglo-Italian congratulations and adieus until they drove away.

Mrs. Latimer, utterly bewildered by the miracle of Allan's embarrassment and arrest, —for she had always held him up as a paragon of discretion,—had been suffering an agony of suspense ever since the departure of Walter, whose incessant occupations, during his brief abode in London, had prevented his writing to her. So irrepressible therefore was her delight, her ecstasy, when the stage drove up to the gate, and deposited both her sons, that she rushed out to the

front garden with a joyful cry, kissing and eagerly welcoming them, and asking them all manner of questions without waiting for a reply, and curtsying very profoundly to the coachman, (a civility, however, which he declined accepting instead of the remainder of the fare,) and finally putting her arms into those of her sons, and pressing them closely to her side, as if she were afraid that they might run away again. Scarcely less tender was Walter's greeting with Ellen, who chanced to be at the cottage when he arrived, and who blushed so sweetly when he ventured to salute her, that he could not resist a repetition of the offence. A happier family meeting it would be impossible to imagine, although the mother's exhilaration was slightly damped when she observed the pale cheek of Allan, who assured her, in reply to her anxious inquiries, that the restoration to his family, his friends, and his native air, would speedily effect a complete re-establishment of his health.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Latimer, who

was always most desirous of preserving for her sons the good opinion of Mr. Brown, Allan walked over to the Manor-House on the following morning for the purpose of paying his respects and of announcing his return to Woodcote. The moment of his calling was auspicious, for in the parlour he found John Chubbs, wearing his Waterloo medal and a smiling countenance, while he counted over the money he was paying to his landlord as a final instalment upon the over-due rent. These monthly operations had always produced a most gracious mood in the receiver of the cash; and as this cleared the slate and wiped off all old scores, Brown's affability and good temper ascended to the culminating point. He had been highly offended with Allan for flying away from Woodcote without assigning any adequate reason,—he had parted from him in anger,—he had never alluded to him since except to speak of him as a silly fellow who didn't know on which side his bread was buttered;—but when he glanced at Chubbs's gold on one side of him, and on the other

marked the pale face and dejected expression of Allan, all was forgotten in a moment: he shook him most heartily by the hand, welcomed him back, and expressed his hope that he would now remain permanently at Woodcote.

"Sit down, John Chubbs," cried his landlord, "and don't stand there twiddling your hat;—don't owe me a farthing now—quits!—want to talk to you about Fanny Groombridge—want you to walk down with me to my new farm; but I must have a little chat first with my young friend, Allan." He accordingly began to catechise him about his late proceedings,—an inquisition which might have occasioned some little embarrassment to its object, had it not been interrupted by the entrance of John Trotman, ushering in the lunatic lady, and the medical gentleman under whose care she had been placed. Owing to the state of her health, a considerable interval had elapsed since he had been enabled to bring her over on her stated visits to the Manor-House, and Brown, who was not only

deeply interested in her mysterious fate, but had become almost as much attached to her as if she were his own child, was proportionately delighted to see her looking more beautiful than ever, while her mental malady, although her faculties were still alienated, had assumed a much more serene and tranquil character. To Allan, who had heard her melancholy story, and who was highly gratified at thus unexpectedly encountering her, she appeared the most interesting creature he had ever beheld, with the single exception of Isola. "If," thought he, "there can be so much perfect elegance of appearance and deportment, so much suavity of manner, so much graciousness and play of countenance, while the intellectual sun is under eclipse, and the music of her voice is silent,—what would she be were her reason fully restored, and her tongue unchained?" So completely was he wrapped in pity and admiration as he kept his eyes immovably fixed upon her, that he did not hear the merchant whisper, "Charming creature, isn't she, Allan? Poor

thing, poor thing! Never saw her before, did you? Another stranger to introduce to you,—Simon Holmes, my nephew—where the deuce has he got to? Want him to see the poor mad lady—can't think where he has got to—send for him directly:" with which words he rang the bell sharply.

John Trotman was a sort of ubiquitarian. Wherever he might be, and however occupied, he always contrived to hear and promptly to answer the bell, although he never seemed to be in a hurry. "Where's Mr. Holmes?" inquired his master, as he entered.

"Next room, speaking to two gentlemen," was the reply.

"Two gentlemen! who can they be, I wonder? Why didn't you show them in here?"

"Strangers. Wished to speak to him alone."

"As soon as they are gone tell him we want him in the parlour." Scarcely had John retired when a loud and angry altercation, followed by what sounded like a des-

perate scuffle and exchange of blows, was heard from the adjoining apartment, the door of which was rudely thrown open, and two strange men rushed into the parlour, dragging after them the struggling Holmes, whom they had collared. At sight of the latter the lunatic, springing from her chair, while both her clenched hands were suddenly pressed to her head, stood for a moment transfixed and motionless as a statue, with open mouth and widely distended eyes, while he upon whom they were riveted, utterly astounded and aghast, recoiled with a shuddering shout of horror, as if he beheld some grisly apparition. Uttering at length a piercing scream, she rushed or rather leaped forwards, murmuring, as she threw herself into his arms, "It is my husband! it is—it is my long-lost husband!"

Still shrinking with manifest terror from her embrace, Holmes, turning deadly pale, and trembling violently all over, timorously ventured, as if still agonised with terror, and still distrusting the evidence of his senses, to steal a glance at her features, then to feel

her face and hands; after which he drew a deep breath, dropped his head over hers, and exclaimed in a hoarse, hollow voice, "It is indeed Agnes—it is my wife—and *living!* I thought she was dead—I thought she was dead!" which latter words he continued repeatedly muttering to himself.

As if revived and inspired with a fresh energy by the very sound of his voice, his wife started from his bosom, seized the arm of one of the Bow Street officers, for such they were, crying out, as she shook it with a convulsive vehemence, "Villain! unhand my husband—unhand him, I say! It is you who assaulted and wounded him before!" But, finding that she could not produce the smallest effect upon the iron grasp that still held him prisoner, she sprang aside, and, falling on her knees before her medical attendant, exclaimed, "Oh, Doctor! Doctor! will you allow this? will you suffer them to carry off my husband? Oh, save him! save him!"

"My dear lady!" replied the party thus addressed, "let me implore you to be calm

—not to make yourself unhappy,—for this is perhaps the most fortunate occurrence that could have happened. You see, Mr. Brown," he continued, evidently more interested in the medical results of this scene upon his patient than in any other of its probable consequences, " it is exactly as I foretold—this fresh shock promises to restore her sanity."

Concluding, from his look and language, that he did not mean to interfere in her behalf, his kneeling petitioner now turned towards Allan, ejaculating, as she clasped her hands passionately together, " To you then I appeal, for I see kindness and compassion in your face. You are young—you are strong—you are a man. Help, oh! help me, for pity's sake, and do not suffer these ruffians to tear away my husband a second time!"

The impassioned tones, the vehement gestures, and the beseeching eyes of the beautiful creature thus appealing to him on her knees, produced such an electrical effect upon the thrilling heart of Allan, that he

bounded forwards, and, tearing away the arm of the foremost officer with one vigorous wrench, shouted out, "Fellows! you must unhand your prisoner, or by Heaven I'll make you! This gentleman is Captain Harcourt; and although I am utterly amazed at seeing him here, although I confess that some strange mystery attaches to him, I will not suffer him to be arrested until I know your right and your authority for thus acting."

"Captain Harcourt!" cried Chubbs, with staring eyes; "why, sure as ever I stand here, that chap be the monk that climbed into my cart! I can swear to him anywhere by the scar on his cheek."

Brown, who had hitherto been silent from sheer bewilderment, now vociferated, "What's the meaning of all this jabber about the monk, and Captain Harcourt, and the devil knows what? You're all playing a game of cross purposes—all at sixes and sevens. I tell you, fellows, this is neither a monk nor Captain Harcourt—but Simon Holmes, my nephew, though he is so

strangely altered somehow that I myself should hardly——Why, Simon! you have shaved off your whiskers."

"No, Sir," said one of the officers, "it is we who tore off his false whiskers, though we were obliged to have a struggle for it; but we wanted to make sure of our bird, and to look for the scar upon his cheek,—and there it is, you see, so that there can't be a mistake of no sort."

"But still," persisted Brown, "it is Simon Holmes, I tell you—my nephew. Surely his own uncle, who has known him from a child, cannot be mistaken."

"Yes, there *must* be some misapprehension," added Allan; "for I repeat that to my certain knowledge this gentleman has passed by the name of Captain Harcourt."

"Ay, Sir, and by half a dozen others," replied the chief officer; "here is our warrant for his apprehension: it specifies more than one *alias*. We are determined to execute our orders: we have a postchaise in waiting, and we must convey our prisoner instantly to Gloucester gaol."

"Zooks, man! what for?—what for?—what offence has he committed?" demanded Brown, brandishing his cane, while Chubbs and Allan made demonstration of supporting him in preventing the removal of the culprit.

"Gentlemen," resumed the officer, producing his staff, "I warn you all in the King's name against any vain attempts at a rescue, for we are armed, and fully resolved to resist force by force. *There* is our warrant—we are sure of our man—he stands charged with conspiracy and fraud, and I'm not sure that we can't bring forgery home to him."

"Simon, Simon Holmes! can this be so?" demanded the uncle, who began to suspect that his worst misgivings were too true. The culprit, who stood utterly confounded and still trembled all over, while his restless eyes alternately glanced round the room and at the kneeling figure of his wife, made no reply; but his confused and terrified looks sufficiently betrayed his guilt. "Nay, then," cried Brown, lowering his

cane, which he had still held uplifted, "I see how it is,—every portion of his body pleads guilty. Allan,—Chubbs,—we must not offer any resistance to the law. Gentlemen, you may remove your prisoner. I see that you have good warrant for your proceedings, but I do trust that some of these heavy charges may not be supported."

As the officers led their unresisting captive towards the door, he turned round, made an effort to collect his faculties, and, looking imploringly at his uncle, said, in a hollow voice, "For God's sake, be kind to poor Agnes! I thought she had been long since dead. I alone am guilty: Agnes has never known anything of my misdeeds,—she is all goodness, all innocence, all purity!" For one moment he fixed his eyes with an expression of regretful anguish upon his wife, uttered a deep groan, and was led from the room.

Agnes, who during the recent colloquy had been looking on with a vague bewilderment, as if her mental alienation had returned, seemed to be recalled to conscious-

ness by the noise of the closing door, for she rose from her knees, as if for the purpose of hurrying after her husband, tottered forward a few paces, uttered a fearful shriek, and fell fainting on the floor. Taking her immediately up in his arms, for she was a light figure, the doctor said to Brown, "This is likely to prove a most important crisis to my patient, and I have every reason to hope that she will now permanently recover her faculties."

"Faculties! I don't care a farthing for faculties! What shall we do to restore animation?" asked the merchant, alarmed at her death-like appearance. "Poor thing, poor thing! she seems to be dead."

"No, no; these fainting-fits are sometimes of long continuance. I would do nothing at present, but suffer nature to revive her; nor would I on any account wish her to be removed. Can she again become your inmate for two or three days?"

"Days! ay, poor thing! for two or three months,—two or three years,—for ever, if she requires it."

"And will you allow me to remain until to-morrow? My presence may, perhaps, be essential."

"To be sure I will, to be sure I will! and I'll go and send Mrs. Glossop to you directly, that your patient may be carried to her own room." And so saying, he hurried off, without taking any further notice of Allan or Chubbs, who immediately left the Manor-House, eager to communicate at their respective homes the strange, the startling occurrence they had just witnessed.

Letter from Mrs. Glossop to Mrs. Jellicoe.

"*Ma share* Mrs. Jellicoe,

"How sorry I am to learn that you have had a complaint in your biliary ducks, and that the quack you consulted has done you more harm than good! but the news that you are coming for some months to Cheltenham has quite given me a *batmong de coor.* I shall certainly ask master's leave to go over and spend a fortnight with you, that we may have a regular *vis a vee*

after so long an absence. I will, as you desire, bring over some of the double stocks grown in my own garden, which are quite worthy of the Haughtyguttural Society. I suppose you were at the last show, for I understand there was a great *foule* there, as the French say.

"I believe I told you that the poor lady whom master found after she had lost her wits has been sent to a feesycian who keeps a house on purpose for two or three of these unfortunate *enfong gatays. Tong mew !* for I was always afraid of her breaking out some day or other into a cataplasm of rage, and attacking some of us with a calving-knife in each hand, or perpetrating some other equally horrible *espieglerie*. Master has been kind enough to take John Chubbs out of prison, who has become a Teetotaler and given up *o. d. v.*, and drinks nothing but water, which I can't help thinking must end in a dropsy. At present, however, he's so much improved that you'd hardly take him for the same *tout autre chose*. Only to think of master's nevy having come back to

him, like the prodigal son, and turning out quite a good young man, after being a downright *volovang* and committing ever so many *foe-paws!*

"I have reserved my last and most amusing piece of news for a *gobe mouche.* What do you think of my having made a conquest, of my inspiring a red-hot *la bell passion* in one of our neighbours? It's as true as a trivet! Some time ago I received a synonimous letter, paying me all sorts of compliments, and calling me a full-blown rose—in fact quite a *Billy do,*—which I suspected, from the handwriting, to come from Mr. Spurling the grocer, and that converted me instantly into a *piece de resistance,* for I don't like him at all. He's a cockney, and can't exasperate the H, and isn't a man of edication, which is a thing I abominate, and squints, and has such a long sharp nose, that he looks for all the world like the sun-dial in our *jardang dagremong.* He came into the housekeeper's room t'other day to settle his monthly bill, just as I was turning over some of Crabbe's poems and Charles

Lamb's tales; so says I, merely *pour passer le tong*, 'Do you prefer Lamb's tales or Crabbe's?' 'Vhy, upon my vord, Mrs. Glossop,' says he, 'I never tasted neither von nor t'other, and, to tell you the truth, I didn't know that crabs had tales.' Whereupon I broke into such a *Hecla de rear*, as the French say, that I thought I should have bust my stays. Then he talked about the money I had got in the savings-bank, and said I must have a capital place, and he supposed I made a pretty addition to the bills when I entered them in my book; whereupon I flared up at such a bearfaced *soupson*. 'No,' says I, 'I never defrauded my master of a farthing in my life, and never will; and I'm astonished at your thinking such a thing of me, whatever you may do yourself.' 'O, Mrs. Glossop,' says he, 'do listen to me, do listen to me! I only wish you would grant me an earring. There's a particular respectable tradesman at Woodcote vhat's over ed and hears in love with you.' '*Mon doo!*' says I, 'who can that be?' 'O you knows!' was his reply; 'and he

looked so uncommon hard at his own snout, that I really thought he had been uttering a tender postrophe to it; but presently he takes my hand and kisses it, and told me it was hisself.' 'Gracious goodness!' says I; why the late Mrs. Spurling only made her *deboo* from the world when we arrived at the Manor-House. She hasn't been long dead.' 'That's an uncommon true observation,' says he, 'but she vont be any déader if I vait ever so long. Consider, Mrs. Glossop, I don't come to you hempty anded, nor without ever an ouse over my ed. I've got an art in my bussom vhat doats upon you, —vidderers make the best husbands—and if you and I make a match on't, I think we might make the pot bile uncommon, purwiding you vould'nt be so wery petiklar about the little overcharges in the Squire's bills.' 'Mr. Spurling,' says I,—for my back was up at such a navish proposal,—'to dismiss all *eclaircissemong* at once, and speak to you plainly, I never will marry a rogue; so you may go about your business as soon as you please.' 'You're only a-standing in your

own light,' says he, 'like the man in the moon, or a thief in a candle.' '*You're* more like the thief,' says I; and I walked out of the room, *au pied de la letter*, but not before he had the immutable insolence to call out, 'You're a hold hobstinate hass!' Was there ever such a fragrant instance of *bienvaillance!* Nobody knows better than yourself, *ma share*, that a person may be obstinate and an ass without any fault of their own; but to call them old, even if it's true, is flying in the face of Nature, which made them so. Mr. Spurling won't supply the Manor-House any longer, I can tell him that. Adieu, *ma share*.

"*Toojoors a voo!*

"MARY GLOSSOP.

"P.S. *O Ciel!* Such a *coo de tonnerre!* —Mr. Holmes turns out to be a downright *double-entendre* after all, and has just been taken off to prison! I'm in such a *jenny say quoi* that I can't write a word more."

CHAPTER IX.

TRANSGRESSORS and outlaws there are whose energies, however misdirected, prove them to be of a bold and generous nature; who, when they declare war against society and defy the vengeance of the law, evince a touch of heroism in their recklessness, as if they felt that the most exciting pleasure of life is the desperate course that places it in constant jeopardy. Even in tracing the exploits and escapes of such adventurers there is an excitement which sometimes defrauds us of our sympathies, when it ought to elicit our sternest reprobation. In this class of daring culprits Simon Holmes could not claim to be enrolled. His was the equally dishonest, but more ignoble course, which, while it violates the law,

seeks to avoid its more heavy penalties; which deals in fraud and swindling rather than an open highway defiance of justice, and depends more upon craft and evasion than upon vigour and audacity. Sensual, unprincipled, and timid, he was at once tempted into evil courses and fearful of their consequences, to guard against which he endeavoured to throw all the serious responsibility of his misdeeds upon his accomplices, and thus to share their profits without their risks. Being better educated and more astute than most of them, this knavish policy often succeeded; and when it threatened failure, he generally disguised himself and had recourse to a temporary flight. Bad as he was, it could hardly be said that he was an irreclaimable rascal, for his fears had repeatedly prompted him to return to an honest life; but he was too irresolute and indecisive to act upon these whisperings of his better angel.

Often arrested for debt, he had as often managed to procure his own extrication, but, as he knew his present confinement to be

grounded on a much more serious charge, supported by the testimony of a female accomplice, who had turned king's evidence, his prostration of spirit was utter and extreme. In a most abject and penitent letter to his uncle, he adjured him to favour him with an immediate interview, solemnly protesting that the whole offence with which he stood charged might be hushed up for a sum of money, and urging him most imploringly to prevent an exposure which would throw ignominy upon the family, by advancing the requisite funds to prevent it. Impelled not less by compassion for the prisoner than by an ardent curiosity to know his real history, Brown lost no time in obeying the summons, when the culprit, throwing himself upon his knees, confessed with many tears that he was utterly undeserving of favour or forgiveness, but harped upon the threatened exposure to the family, and again with piteous and grovelling appeals besought his auditor to buy him off.

"I suspect, Sir," replied his uncle, with a severe countenance, "that you have hitherto

been telling a pack of lies, so that I shall hardly know what to believe. Get up, Sir, from your knees—sit down in this chair; let me know your real history: and mark this, Sir,—it will be your interest to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; for if I catch you out in a lie, or the hundredth part of a lie, I shall instantly leave you to your fate, even if it should be the gallows. Ha! ha!" Having ratified this sentence with the ferule of his cane, he sat himself down, the prisoner placed himself in a chair at a little distance, and after a short pause, as if to collect his thoughts and dry his tears, thus began:—"Will you excuse me for stating at the outset that you yourself were in some degree the cause of all my errors, by your kindness in advancing the 750*l.* which I have so recently been enabled to repay you? To the command of this sum I fear I may attribute all my misfortunes,—first, because it showed me how easily money may be raised upon sham securities; and, secondly, because it helped me to procure a wife,—a virtuous and most

exemplary one, I confess,—whose fortune tempted me into all sorts of riot and excess."

"You're a pretty fellow, arn't you," interposed Brown, "to lay all your own shameful misconduct at my door and your innocent wife's? If that 750*l.* proved your ruin, it was—first, because you were a cheating rascal, and, secondly, because you were a dissipated fool. Had you there! Go on."

"Alas! alas! perhaps you are right, Sir," sighed the prisoner, who had been glad to catch at any excuse, however absurd. "Chance had introduced me to Agnes Hatherland, the orphan daughter of a clergyman: she was then living at Wandsworth with her only relation, an aged aunt; she was beautiful and accomplished. I really loved her, but I am not sure that I should have paid her my addresses had I not learnt that she had a small fortune in her own possession. I represented myself as your commercial partner in London, having previously engaged a counting-house, on the door of which I inscribed the firm of Brown and Holmes. I had the command of 750*l.*;

I kept horses and servants; I won the affections of Agnes; the aunt was completely deceived as to my circumstances; we were married; and, for a short time, I enjoyed such perfect happiness with my wife, who was every way as amiable and good as she was beautiful, that I was guilty of no misdeed, except plunging into an improvident expense in my style of living. Soon after our union her aunt died, and I then removed to Woodford in Essex, where I furnished a house in a lavish style, riding or driving every day to London, as if I were regularly engaged in business, though I was chiefly occupied in dissipating my wife's fortune in wild excesses of all sorts, into which I was seduced by some profligate characters, with whom I had unfortunately become acquainted.

"In less than a year I had nothing left, but I studiously concealed my situation from my wife, well knowing, such was her inflexible integrity and high sense of honour, that she would insist upon our selling off everything and living like paupers, which

would have interfered with all my plans and speculations for recovering what I had wasted. Nor dared I—for she was not less strict in morals than refined in manners—introduce any of my loose companions to our house at Woodford. In fact, her pure life and sentiments seemed to reproach me for my course of life, and I began to dislike her, and to absent myself from home for several days at a time, urging as a reason the pressure of business in the City. The birth of a little boy rekindled my affection for his mother, and for some time after her confinement I paid her all the attentions that her situation required; but the child was accidentally killed by falling from his nurse's arms; her health was injured by the shock; the nutriment intended for her babe brought on an alarming fever, and she became delirious. At this juncture a writ was out against me; a sheriff's officer forced himself into the house to serve it; in a moment of irritation I assaulted him furiously with a bludgeon, when he snatched up a cutlass, with which he severely wounded

me on the cheek, and at that instant my poor wife, alarmed by our struggle, ran into the room, screaming out as she saw my plight, 'It is my husband's blood—it is his blood!—Oh! save him—save him! Help! help!'"

"The very words," said Brown, "that the poor dear creature ejaculated when Trotman and I first encountered her in the unfurnished house, and she had cut her arms with the glass. Poor thing! I dare say her accident recalled the scene you have just been describing. Well, Sir, you will carry the scar of that wound to your grave; and it was to conceal it, I suppose, that you wore those bushy false whiskers. And what became of you next, and of your unfortunate wife?"

"This additional concussion and terror confirmed the alienation of her mind. After paying the debt for which I had been arrested, which was easily done by the sale of my furniture, I placed her in a private madhouse near London, and giving myself up to evil courses, following the bad example of bad

company, soon sunk into a regular scamp and blackleg, attending gaming-houses, races, and fairs, and at one time travelling about to such resorts with a gambling-booth of my own. I wish I had done nothing worse. My comrades led me into some extensive swindling transactions, which compelled me at last to quit the country for a short time; and, as I thought I might as well turn my absence to good account, I went to Smyrna, in the hope of effecting a reconciliation with you, and of being thus enabled to reform my life: but you had left the place, which defeated my good intentions, and afforded another instance of my bad luck."

"Bad luck, Sir? Bad conduct, bad heart, bad head, bad everything. Don't tell me of bad luck. Go on, Sir."

"On my returning to London, which I did immediately, I found my wife in the same unfortunate state, and a heavy demand was made upon me for the cost of her maintenance. A lucky hit at the gaming-table supplied the means of defraying it, and I removed her to a cheaper establishment of

the same nature near the banks of the Severn in Gloucestershire, where, however, I found that they required a larger advance, by way of security, than I had taken with me. I had allowed my wife to keep in her possession a valuable gold watch set with brilliants, to which she attached a particular value because it belonged to her mother, and contained a miniature of her father. This I deposited with the keeper of the madhouse as a collateral security."

"And that very watch is now locked up in my desk!—But go on, go on;—we'll talk of that by and by."

"At one of the London haunts which I frequented, passing myself off for a man of fashion, I had forced myself upon the acquaintance of a Mr. Cavendish, a weak, dissipated, extravagant coxcomb, whom I marked immediately for my prey, and as he was fond of cards, and an unsuspicious player, I quickly laid him under contribution. He solicited me to take part in some private theatricals which he was getting up at Cheltenham, in conjunction

with several friends,—an invitation which I gladly accepted, thinking it might be turned to good account. On my arrival at Cheltenham, I proceeded to visit my unfortunate wife, and, knowing that Cavendish was a great collector of old-fashioned trinketry, I reclaimed her jewelled watch from the keeper of the madhouse, not doubting that I should sell it to my friend at a considerable advance of price.

"The part allotted to me to perform was that of an old monk. I had completely painted and accoutred myself for a dress rehearsal one afternoon, when I was told that two strange men had been inquiring for me, and were then lurking behind one of the side-scenes. A furtive glance which I obtained without rendering myself visible, soon satisfied me that they were Bow Street officers, for one of my recent swindling transactions had set them on the alert, and I need hardly tell you that I lost not an instant in decamping from the house, which was situated on the outskirts of the town. Skulking along among the brakes and bushes, I presently

reached an old lime-kiln, in which I concealed myself until the sky became darkened with a heavy rain and a violent thunder-storm, when I stole from my lair, ran across two or three fields, reached a high road skirted with glades and underwood, in the dark shade of which I hurried forwards until I overtook a farmer's cart, into which I climbed, and it was from the driver I first learned that you had settled at Woodcote. The officers, however, had discovered my flight; they had succeeded in tracking me; I heard them in full pursuit; I jumped from the cart; made for the wood, which luckily skirted the road, and, favoured by the darkness of the night, succeeded in effecting my escape, though not without a dangerous fall into a gravel-pit, upon which occasion I must have lost the gold watch, for I missed it shortly afterwards."

"No: it was found in Chubbs's cart."

"I must have dropped it, then, when I clambered in, or when I struggled with the driver for the possession of his whip."

"And if Chubbs hadn't told you, you

would have remained in ignorance of my being at Woodcote?"

"Not altogether; it was confirmed to me by a stranger with whom I subsequently fell into conversation on the top of a stage-coach; but as I was then travelling *incognito*, and his inquiries excited my suspicions, I thought it most prudent to leave him in the lurch as soon as possible. If I am not mistaken, however, I fell in with the same gentleman not long afterwards at Tattersall's."

"Well, well, Sir; I don't want to hear about strange gentlemen. Tell me about your wife. How came she to leave the mad-house in which you had placed her?"

"To that point I was just coming. A letter from the keeper having apprised me that she had escaped from his custody, and was supposed to have been drowned in the Severn, I hurried immediately to the spot, and, from the inquiries I made, had every reason to conclude that she was indeed no more! She had stolen out of the house in the dusk of evening, had made her way to the river, stepped upon a pile of floating timber

moored to the bank, proceeded to its further extremity, and walked into the water, not as if designing to throw herself in, but as if totally unconscious of her own actions. An old waterman, the sole witness of this occurrence, who saw her struggling for a moment with the waves, expressed his perfect conviction of her being drowned, since he presently lost sight of her; and as her shawl and bonnet were washed ashore, at some distance lower down, I did not entertain a moment's doubt of her death. No wonder, therefore, that I could not believe my own eyes, that I was utterly astounded when I again beheld her living. How she got ashore I cannot imagine."

"Nor can I tell you, unless it was by means of another float of timber, for they are numerous in that part of the Severn near which you found her. It was in a lone empty house, to which the poor creature had doubtless wandered for shelter, for she had neither shawl nor bonnet, and her clothes were wringing wet. Trotman—(that fellow's always right!)—said she must have been in

the Severn. You may be thankful, Sir, that she fell into my hands, and so am I. But surely you must have seen some of the advertisements about her which I inserted in the county papers."

"Not one; I quitted Gloucestershire immediately, and none of its papers ever fell in my way."

"But the keeper of the madhouse must have seen them. How can you account for his silence?"

"I was always in arrears with him—we had quarrelled at our last interview—he had repeatedly insisted upon her being removed—he had discovered enough of my character to be apprehensive that she might be altogether thrown upon his hands, and perhaps thought himself justified, under these circumstances, in disclaiming all knowledge of her. He told me, I remember, that he had already been a heavy sufferer in this way."

"Glad the fellow didn't claim her. Much better in my hands than his. Well, Sir, go on with your story."

"Believing myself now to be in a situation to contract a second marriage, I thought it not unlikely that my fashionable appearance, and my assumed name of Captain Harcourt, might procure me another monied wife; an object in which, for a few days, I imagined myself upon the point of succeeding. An accidental encounter in Russell Square bringing me acquainted with a girl who represented herself as a great heiress, I prevailed upon her to elope with me; but at the railway-station she met an acquaintance, from whom, and from her own confession, I learnt that the biter had been nearly bit, that she was the portionless daughter of a house-agent with a large family, and I therefore lost not a moment in decamping. The gentleman to whom we were thus both indebted is the same, if I mistake not, who interrogated me on the top of the coach, and whom I again saw yesterday in your parlour."

"What! Allan Latimer? Odd enough —odd enough! But they couldn't arrest you for that, Sir. What has all this to do with

your being taken up on such a heavy charge, and imprisoned in Gloucestershire gaol?"

"You desired a full account of my life since we parted; you commanded me to tell the whole truth, and I am doing so; but I will hasten to the misfortune which has placed me in this perilous and disgraceful situation. Having occasion to visit one of my subordinate accomplices, who had found his way into the infirmary at Chatham, he drew my attention to the very remarkable resemblance between myself and one of the patients in the same ward. This man might easily have passed for my twin brother, and what rendered the likeness still more close and extraordinary, was a wound he had received during his service in the navy, which, though it had left a more serious scar than mine, was precisely in the same place. The surgeon of the house, whom I casually questioned respecting him, told me that the poor fellow's complaint was quite incurable, though he might possibly linger on for a few weeks, or perhaps months."

"Pondering upon these circumstances as I returned to London, I devised a scheme of fraud much more daring and extensive than any upon which I had hitherto ventured, and lost no time in adopting the preliminary measures for its execution. I engaged a small furnished house at Richmond, on the door of which the name of Captain Harcourt was conspicuously painted; my confederate took another; we lived in a most respectable manner for a few weeks, after which I went to an office in London, and proposed to insure my life for three thousand pounds, referring to the aforesaid friend for the customary certificate as to his knowledge of my life and habits. This he forwarded to the office, as well as a document signed by the first physician of the place, testifying that I was in good health, which he had forged under my dictation—for I always left the ticklish part of such proceedings to others. The insurance was effected, and my accomplice was employed to watch the state of my *fac-simile* in the Chatham infirmary. He did not die so soon as we could

have wished, but still I had not very long to wait: his complaint carried him off; and on the very day that he was buried we proceeded to the next stage of our plot. My colleague and another friend rowed themselves in a wherry to Richmond; they dined with me: as the night was setting in they returned to the landing-place, affecting to be tipsy, and drawing the attention of the watermen by their uproarious conduct. Contrary to the advice of the bystanders, I got into the boat, declaring that I would accompany them to London to see them safe home. Before we reached Fulham it was quite dark, when they set me secretly ashore, rowed against the piers of the bridge, upon which they jumped, purposely overturned the wherry, which they suffered to drift with the tide, and then bawled lustily for assistance. Upon being taken off by some boatmen who soon came to their aid, they pretended to be in agonies of distress for their dear friend Captain Harcourt, who couldn't swim, and who must infallibly be drowned. Early next morning the boat

was found keel upwards—but no Captain Harcourt. My friends were of course inconsolable, but they did all they could; they offered a reward for the recovery of the body, and inserted an account of my melancholy death in the papers."

"But what were you to get by all this planning and plotting, since you were not drowned, but alive and hearty?"

"Grant me your patience, Sir, and you shall hear. The body of the dead sailor, being disinterred on the very night of his burial, was conveyed in a sack, under cover of the darkness, to a house in an obscure alley of the city, where it was arrayed in the clothes that I had worn when I left Richmond, care having been taken to put my ring upon one of the fingers, and to insert into the pockets everything that might establish my identity; after which it was carried in a boat to Fulham, and, before the morning broke, was thrown into the river. The reward offered for its recovery ensured its being speedily found, and my confederates took care to be present, in order to prevent

the pockets from being rifled. It was carried to a public-house at Chelsea—an inquest was held—my afflicted friends gave evidence upon oath as to its being the body of Captain Harcourt, as well as to the circumstances of his death—a verdict was returned accordingly—a public burial took place, my friends acting as chief mourners, and the sailor's body was a second time committed to the earth. The coroner gave his certificate of the verdict, the clergyman of the burial: all was regular; not a doubt of my death was entertained in any quarter. I had previously made a will, leaving the policy to a woman who passed as my wife, and who had latterly taken the name of Harcourt, to which indeed she was as well entitled as myself. The will was proved, letters of administration were taken out, and the legacy duty was paid."

"And a pretty set of rascals you were, to be sure! What! had she actually received the three thousand pounds?"

"Not then. By the terms of the policy the payment was not to take place until six

months after the death of the party assured."

"And where were you all this time? You would hardly venture to show your face in London?"

"Certainly not. Immediately after my supposed death, I disguised myself as a Quaker, and proceeded to Gravesend: from which place I embarked stealthily on board an American vessel bound to New York; and there I remained until the time for payment was at hand, when I returned to England. The money was shortly afterwards received by my pretended widow; the spoil was divided among us all, in the proportions originally agreed upon,—the lion's share being, of course, reserved for myself. I disguised myself with umbrageous whiskers, and a half-Quakerish style of dress; resumed my proper name of Simon Holmes; and being really anxious to escape from the precarious and miserable life I had lately been leading, I resolved to appropriate a part of the money to the repayment of the 750*l.* you had lent me."

"May I inquire, Sir, what rendered you so unaccountably honest all of a sudden?"

"I had great reason to mistrust my confederates, who quickly began to extort more money from me by threats; I hoped to be reconciled to you; to live with you:—I believed that the sequestered situation of the Manor-House would effectually prevent my detection; and if the fraud should be discovered, I trusted that you would generously come forward, and save me from a disgrace that must extend to yourself, for I knew that the insurance-office would be glad to hush up the whole affair, provided the money were refunded. This I thought you would be still more likely to do, if I married and settled at Woodcote; but, alas! all my plans have been frustrated by the treachery of the vile and accursed woman who passed for my widow. Not long since she visited me at the Manor-House for the purpose of extorting money; she has since written to me for more, which I peremptorily and angrily refused, and the infamous wretch, as I learn

from the officers who arrested me, has turned king's evidence."

"Ay, ay, the old story—the instruments of our guilt are made its avengers. How could you expect honour or honesty among thieves and prostitutes? What further villanies have you to confess?"

"None—I have told you everything without reserve; and surely, dear Sir, you will admit that *I* am the least criminal of the whole party. *I* have committed no forgery of documents, *I* have given no false evidence, *I* have been guilty of no perjury, and if I have suffered myself to be deluded by bad company and evil example——"

"Hold your tongue, sirrah! You have sneaked out of the worst danger, as you just now allowed, from fear and cunning, not principle. Bad company, indeed! Your own was the worst that you ever kept. I know not what to believe, what to do; but I will see my lawyer, and write to you."

"Nay, but promise me, before you go," cried the culprit, falling upon his knees, and clasping his hands in a supplicating atti-

tude—"promise me, my friend, my only friend, my dear, dear uncle, that you will—"

"I will promise you nothing!" interposed Brown sternly—"except that I will consult my lawyer. Hands off, Sir, and don't dare to touch me. Whatever may be your fate, you have brought it upon your own head. Ha! ha!" So saying, he struck the stone floor most energetically with his cane, and strode rapidly away.

Brown's promises were always promptly executed. He saw his solicitor, who wrote to the office in London inquiring whether there was any possibility of compromising their claim, and upon receiving their answer, which was unfavourable, he rode over to Gloucester to communicate it to the prisoner, when he learned that he had been seized with a malignant fever which had suddenly broken out in the gaol, and that it would hardly be safe to see him. Brown gave instant orders for the best medical advice that the town could supply: but all art was vain, the disease was of a fatal nature; a constitution undermined by dissipated

courses, a spirit prostrated by terror and remorse, accelerated its progress: he expired at the end of a few days.

"Death makes up all quarrels," said his uncle, "and atones for all transgressions, so far as the living are concerned. Let the poor fellow have a decent burial." The funeral, which took place at Gloucester, was attended by Brown, Roger Crab, Allan and Walter Latimer. Captain Molloy was invited; but as he had no black coat, he made a point of having a racking toothache, which lasted till the mourners had left Woodcote on their way to the place of interment, when he took advantage of Crab's absence to go and shoot his rabbits.

Agnes, for by that name must we henceforth designate the lunatic lady, fortunately confirmed the prognostications of her medical attendant. She awoke from her fainting fit, which was of long continuance, in a state of extreme exhaustion, but her intellects, though at first confused, were no longer deranged. "Either I have seen my husband," she faintly murmured—"or I have had a

strange dream. But why—why did those men seize him?"

"Hush, my dear lady!" said the doctor, who was sitting by her side. "You *have* seen him, but we must not talk about it until to-morrow. For the present I must enjoin silence, though your thoughts may return thanks to God for the restoration of your reason." The patient slightly started, and would have spoken, but her attendant held up his fore-finger, again whispering the words, "Hush, my dear lady!" a request which was implicitly obeyed, such was the influence he had acquired, by his invariable kindness and gentleness, over all those who were committed to his care. A composing-draught secured refreshing slumbers for the patient, who awoke on the following morning still weak and dejected, but perfectly sane, and eager to gather some further intelligence respecting her husband, and the cause of their leaving Woodford, which seemed to be the last locality distinctly impressed upon her recollection.

For the present the doctor contented him-

self with informing her that her husband had been arrested for debt, but that she herself was in the hands of friends who would take good care of her, promising further information when they should return home. Hastening to Brown's room with the joyful news of his patient's convalescence, he said, "I am beyond measure anxious to complete the cure of this most interesting creature, but it will require care, very great care—we must guard against a relapse—the past occurrences, and the present situation of her husband, must be gradually, very gradually broken to her; and in the mean time her mind, to prevent its preying upon itself, must be occupied and amused. These attentions she cannot receive anywhere so well as at my house, for she has been accustomed to the sight of my wife and daughters, who will gladly devote themselves to her consolation and diversion. You had better, therefore, let her remain with me for two or three months longer, or, at all events, until I can pronounce her perfectly and permanently cured." To this suggestion, the propriety of which he

immediately recognised, Brown gave a willing assent. Towards the middle of the day the carriage was ordered to the door, the doctor assisted his patient into it, and they drove slowly away from the Manor-House, the proprietor of which, who had been requested not to appear, in order that there might be no unnecessary excitement on the part of Agnes, followed the vehicle with his eyes, repeatedly ejaculating, "God bless her, poor thing!" until it was no longer visible.

"My dear Walter!" exclaimed Ellen, running into the parlour where the brothers were singing to amuse their mother, "how fortunate it was that your sudden journey to London compelled us to defer our marriage! It would ever have been a bitter pang to my heart had it taken place without my father's consent; but since this unfortunate affair of Mr. Holmes, his mind is completely changed. I have just been speaking to him on the subject, and he is now quite as anxious for our immediate union as he was lately opposed to it."

"I'm sure, my sweet Ellen!" replied the lover, "that I'm quite as impatient as he can be; and as all our arrangements are already made, our best plan will be to settle it for to-morrow."

"And this lucky delay will enable our dear Allan to be present," added the mother, looking at him affectionately. "And don't you think, Walter, now that the ceremony is to take place publicly, that it would be only right, and proper, and respectful to communicate it to our kind friend Mr. Brown?"

"I quite agree with you, mother," was the reply, "and I will walk over to the Manor-House at once, for there is no time like the time present."

The merchant was too much annoyed and vexed by the recent disgrace of his nephew (for he had only been two days arrested at the period of Walter's visit) to listen very patiently to his detail of his intended clandestine marriage with Ellen, and of the circumstances that now dictated its prompt and public celebration. How-

ever, he said nothing till his visitant had completed his statement, when he bluffly blurted out, "What! does the whole parish want to marry Ellen Molloy? That unfortunate—I mean, that rascally young scamp, Simon Holmes, bothered me about her t'other day. Well, Sir, well—do as you like. It's no concern of mine. Thank God! *I* never married!"

Have we ever mentioned that one of the bells of Woodcote church was cracked? Such was the fact; but on the following morning no one seemed to find it out, for the peal that announced the marriage of Walter and Ellen sounded not less musical than merry to every ear; every face in the whole village was radiant with joy; while the fields looked as bright and gay, and the sky as sunny and happy, as if it were also the wedding-day of heaven and earth. Mrs. Latimer and Allan, Captain Molloy and Matilda, Roger Crab and the friendly Mr. Dawson, the apothecary, were present at the ceremony, which passed off amid grateful smiles and joyful tears, but offered

nothing worthy of special record. Immediately after the nuptials the happy pair proceeded to Gloucester, where Walter had engaged a furnished house, in which he intended to reside until the plans of the family should be definitively arranged.

It has been hinted that Captain Molloy had peculiar and urgent reasons for wishing to expedite the settlement of his daughter, —reasons to which he himself had, more than once, made dark allusion. Of this anxiety the cause now transpired. For some freak more than usually outrageous, he had severely chastised Valentine, who took a most effectual revenge by giving information to the whist-players at Cheltenham of the fraudulent manœuvres by which he had assisted his grandfather to plunder them. A committee was called to investigate the affair, but as the young informer, who had run away from his home, was nowhere to be found, the Captain flattered himself that he would not be forthcoming on the appointed day. Not only, however, did he present himself, but he so completely

succeeded in establishing his charge, that Molloy was called upon to refund his unjust gains, under penalty of being everywhere posted as a notorious rogue and cheat.

Refunding the money being as completely out of the question as refuting the accusation, he suddenly recollected that a friend to whom he wished to make a very particular communication, had recently settled in Australia; it was absolutely necessary to follow him, and as he hated all parade, he decamped one night from Woodcote, without beat of drum, and in a few days embarked, with his daughter Matilda, who had heard that husbands were exceedingly abundant at Port Phillip, on board an emigrant vessel bound for that settlement. That we may not have further occasion to refer to them, we may as well state at once that she succeeded in her object, that she married at last; and that though the husband she has found, and the life she now leads (being compelled to rough it in a new country), bear as little resemblance as possible to the desiderated nabob, and a luxurious residence

at Cheltenham and Bath, she makes a good wife, and is not dissatisfied with her lot.

Of the Captain we cannot render an equally favourable report. Utterly unfitted for the struggles and exertions of a settler, he speedily sunk into idle and disreputable habits, became the Jeremy Diddler of the locality, and gave himself up to smoking and sottishness with an abandonment which has already undermined his health, and threatens, ere long, to terminate his career.

The runaway Valentine, received on board the yacht of an eccentric nobleman, that he might amuse him with his mischief-making and monkey tricks, was brought by those propensities to an untimely end. In order to escape from a messmate whom he had provoked by a most unwarrantable personal joke, he scampered up the rigging with his usual activity, ran along the yards, and had just given the customary shrieking laugh, followed by the exclamation of "Crikey, what fun!" when a sudden lurch of the vessel jerked him into the sea. The

boats were instantly lowered, and every exertion made to save him; but he was never seen to rise to the surface. He died in his vocation.

CHAPTER X.

Two days after the marriage of Ellen and Walter, Mrs. Glossop applied for three weeks' leave of absence, that she might pay the promised visit to her friend Mrs. Jellicoe, at Cheltenham. Most unwilling was her master to grant her request, for she had rendered herself so indispensable to his comfort by her attention to all his habits and peculiarities; the household affairs, under her direction, were so well managed and orderly; she kept such a vigilant watch over the tradespeople, and was so conscientious and accurate in the settlement of the accounts, that he could not bear the thought of her absence, even for the most limited period. As he could not, however, deny the injustice of refusing

her a reasonable indulgence on the very grounds that entitled her to it, he granted her request, and gave her the use of his carriage for her conveyance to Cheltenham. Shortly after her departure Mrs. Latimer and Allan went over to Gloucester, on a visit to the newly-married couple; and at the same juncture Mr. Crab took his invalid wife to Bath, for the benefit of the waters — a concurrence of circumstances which removed from Adam Brown all the parties upon whom he had been accustomed to depend for social and domestic comfort, and for the first time since his arrival in the country "left him alone in his glory." Such a desertion was doubly trying at the moment when he was not only deeply afflicted by the disgrace and death of his nephew, but felt the loss of his companionship every hour of the day.

Misfortunes never come alone. To all these annoyances were now added a severe attack of his old complaint, the asthma, accompanied with a new one in the shape of rheumatism, and a distressing prostration

of spirits. He discovered, or more probably imagined, that the tradespeople, taking advantage of his housekeeper's absence, were endeavouring to cheat him, which was always a sore trial to his temper; and to complete the catalogue of his misfortunes, the stupid woman who had been engaged as a temporary substitute for Mrs. Glossop, gave him an embrocation to swallow, which ought to have been applied to his rheumatic limb—a mistake which for two or three days made him seriously ill, and increased his irritation almost to madness.

Pondering upon all these troubles and vexations during the time of his convalescence, which, though not long, appeared interminably tedious; and casting in his mind how he might best prevent the recurrence of, at least, some portion of his recent annoyances, he formed a very important, and yet not a very unusual resolution.

Like many other sapient old bachelors, who pass through life, from youth to age, sneering with contemptuous pity at such of their friends as happen to commit matri-

mony, shrugging up their shoulders with a knowing chuckle when they hear of any conjugal squabbles, and sarcastically thanking God that *they* never married, Adam Brown determined to—marry his housekeeper! To him there appeared fewer objections to such a proceeding than might have presented themselves to many others. Of very humble origin himself, he cared nothing for the artificial distinctions of birth and station; the opinions of society, so far as regarded class observances and conventional forms, he had always set at nought; he found himself, in the decline of life, not only without a companion or a friend, but without any claimant for the fortune which it had cost him so much toil and trouble to accumulate: Mrs. Glossop might not supply all these deficiencies, but he had now ascertained beyond all possibility of doubt, that she was absolutely necessary to his comfort; there was no way to secure her but by marrying her; and what was the use of his wealth and his independence if he could not choose a wife where he liked?

Self-willed and hasty, he had no sooner formed this resolution than he became impatient for its accomplishment, and on the very day of Mrs. Glossop's return communicated his intentions to her. "*Mon Doo!*" she exclaimed in utter amazement; "surely, Sir, you cannot be speaking *au naturel.* You're only joking, I'm sure, just for a *vive la bagatelle,* for you never could think of going to bemean yourself in such a manner." When her master convinced her that he was perfectly in earnest, Mrs. Glossop, who was a truly conscientious woman, pointed out to him the disadvantages which such a union would be likely to entail, declaring that the world would ridicule it, and universally pronounce his condemnation for thus lowering himself. This was said in all honesty of purpose, without the most remote thought of provoking his antagonistic spirit; but it produced that effect nevertheless. He snapped his fingers defyingly, in order to indicate his respect for the opinion of the world, and pressed his suit, or rather indicated his

determined will, with so much decision, that Mrs. Glossop, thinking she had said everything required by her duty to her master, whom she sincerely respected, and that she was not bound any longer to oppose his wishes and her own advancement, signified her consent, and expressed her gratitude with many low curtseys; and thus Adam Brown, the confirmed old bachelor, came to be married at last.

Upon the particulars of this incongruous union, which was celebrated without delay, it is not our purpose to dwell. Nothing occurred to signalize the nuptials, except that Brown made a present of a new bell to the church, to replace the damaged one, and occasioned an unusual quantity of laughter and ridicule throughout the whole neighbourhood by his selection of such an extraordinary bride. Scarcely had the honeymoon expired when both parties began to suspect that their marriage had been a mistake. The ci-devant housekeeper still wished to be bustling about, as usual, among the pots, preserves, and saucepans of the

housekeeper's room and the kitchen; but Brown, though he cared not a rush what menial occupations he pursued himself, was fine and fastidious in the person of his wife, and prohibited in the most peremptory manner all such indulgences, as inconsistent with her present station. He was determined to show that she could be a lady, and so she was, as far as idleness went,—but no further. She could not sit quiet all day, dressed up very fine, and twiddling her thumbs, without feeling miserably bored. Competent to do almost anything, but quite unable to do nothing, her bustling cheerfulness gave way to a lethargic moping; she felt herself to be in a false position,—completely out of her element.

A low woman thus craving for stimulus and excitement might have betaken herself to spirituous liquors; Mrs. Brown had recourse to spiritu*al* dram-drinking. When at Cheltenham she had repeatedly accompanied her friend to the chapel of a Mr. Griffin, one of those presumptuous, fanatical

anathematisers "who deal damnation round the land," who conciliate the weak, and timid, and selfish portion of their flock by promising them the very best places in heaven; and the malignant by assuring them that all the friends and neighbours who do not adopt their own precise tenets, shall be doomed to the very lowest pit of the infernal regions. By dint of perpetually decrying this sinful world and all its luxuries, Mr. Griffin had succeeded in surrounding himself with all the luxuries he condemned. Of this ascetic preacher Mrs. Brown became a disciple, finding such pleasant excitement in his furious denunciations, and in the society of her friend Mrs. Jellicoe, who might almost be termed the high-priestess of his temple, that she was constantly driving over to Cheltenham to attend his preachings and lectures, never failing, upon such occasions, to load her carriage with the choicest produce of the garden and farm.

Brown had looked forward to the possession of a companion who would cheer his

solitude and inoccupation by sharing a game of cards or cribbage, or billiards, by reading amusing books to him, for his own eyes began to fail, by accompanying him to the rustic cricketings and merry-meetings, as well as to the social parties of the neighbourhood, or by occasionally driving over to Gloucester to see a play; but from these recreations his wife recoiled with horror—they were all denounced by the Rev. Mr. Griffin as sinful and damnable. It was vexatious enough that she should forego these innocent amusements in her own person, but when she began to condemn her husband if he indulged in them, and to threaten him with eternal perdition if he did not abandon them, Brown waxed wroth, and told her, in no very measured terms, that he insisted upon being the master of his own house, adding, that if she didn't like it, she might leave it. No one knew better than herself that he was a person whom it was difficult to guide, and almost impossible to coerce, especially by a menace; she entertained a sincere respect for his character;

she was truly grateful for the position in which he had placed her; and as she was really a good sort of woman, it might have been thought that she would have held it a duty to contribute to the happiness of his life, instead of rendering it wretched by waging with him an incessant warfare of household persecution. Morality, however, never becomes so thoroughly perverted as when it is in alliance with superstition, and none are so likely to prove unfeeling, and even unprincipled, as weak-minded people who are at the same time conscientious. Such was the case with Mrs. Brown: a false standard of duty led her away from the true one; there was a right meaning even in her wrong actions; and if she made her husband miserable in this world, it was with the pious intention of preventing his being so in the next.

A coarse joke of Brown's fanned these threatening embers of conjugal difference into a flame. Long and frequently had he been tormented by his wife to attend Mr. Griffin's chapel; steadily, and sometimes

rudely, had he refused. That reverend gentleman had found that he could not mortify the flesh for a course of years, and in his own peculiar way, with impunity; his macerations must have been confined to the spirit, for his body had become exceedingly corpulent. "You would not speak to me in this un-Christian language," said Mrs. Brown, after some taunting reproach of her husband, "if I could only once prevail upon you to sit under the saint—the Reverend Mr. Griffin."

"Believe you there!" was the reply; "never speak again if I was to sit under such a great fat porpoise as that;—squeezed as flat as a pancake. Had you there, Madam. Ha! ha!" The speech itself, the triumphant rap of the cane, the chuckling laugh, the shake of the shoulders, were too much, even for the pious Mrs. Brown. An insult to herself she could have endured with resignation, nay, with pleasure;—but to ridicule that dear saint!!—it was intolerable! A fierce altercation ended in an agreement to separate,—a proposal so ac-

ceptable to both parties, that it was carried into immediate execution: the time that had elapsed from the morning of their ill-assorted marriage being exactly three months!

Apportioning the sum rather to the station from which he had taken her, than to his own fortune, Mr. Brown settled three hundred a year upon his wife, who went to live with her friend Mrs. Jellicoe at Cheltenham, devoting nearly half her income to the dear, corpulent saint, who is thus furnished with additional reasons for decrying the pomps, vanities, and luxuries of this sinful and miserable world.

Immeasurable was the relief afforded by this separation to the mind of Brown, who, though he was peremptory, detested wrangling, and whose own liability to depression of spirits made him especially hate a moping and austere companion. Habitual gloom and causeless complaints of the world's misery he deemed a sinful ingratitude towards God; and while he condemned his wife for her offences of this nature, he could not help thinking that she had been equally deficient

in duty towards himself, her greatest earthly benefactor. Most annoying was it to him also to feel that his marriage had been a mistake, a false move, a bad speculation; for though he cared little for the judgment of others, he did not like to stand impeached and convicted in his own.

On the very morning after the final departure of his wife, a new direction was luckily given to his brooding thoughts, and a fresh occupation furnished for his active mind, by the appearance of the medical gentleman under whose care Mrs. Holmes had been placed. "Allow me, Mr. Brown, most sincerely to congratulate you," were his first words, as he cordially shook the merchant's hand. "My letters will have apprised you that my charming patient, although still dejected in spirits, is completely restored to mental and bodily health, nor have I any longer the least apprehension of a relapse. The painful tidings of her husband's death were gradually communicated to her: she believes him to have been solely arrested for debt; of the disgraceful

circumstances attached to his career she knows nothing whatever; for he himself, profligate as he was, seems to have entertained such a reverence of her purity and high character, as always to have concealed from her his misdeeds. In that ignorance I would recommend that she should still be kept, and never exposed to any unnecessary excitement."

"You think, then, that she may safely be brought back to the Manor-House?"

"I thought so a month or two ago; but to tell you the truth, my wife, my daughters, and myself were all so much delighted with her society, that we could not bear to part with her. A more delightful, sensible, and accomplished person I never encountered. She is passionately devoted to music, and is exceedingly fond of female society, in both of which, if she becomes an inmate of the Manor-House, I could wish you frequently to indulge her."

"If she becomes an inmate!" cried Brown; "to be sure she will. Where else should she go to? Am I not her uncle by

her marriage? I'll order the carriage immediately, and bring her home this very day."

So much was Agnes improved in appearance by the complete restoration of her health and reason, so lovely, so interesting did she look in her widow's weeds, that Brown did not at first recognise her, and when he did, he was so completely overcome with surprise and joy, that his eyes became suffused with tears. "God bless you, my dear niece!" he exclaimed in a tremulous voice, as he repeatedly and affectionately kissed her; "how happy am I to see you so wonderfully improved! Ods bobs! you will make your old uncle as proud as a peacock. Come along! come along!—they can send your rattletraps after you. I sha'n't feel comfortable till I get you back to the Manor-House."

That he might not lose a single day in carrying into effect the doctor's recommendation, Brown called next morning upon Mrs. Latimer, who had just returned from Gloucester, inviting her and Allan to come

and spend a fortnight at the Manor-House, that they might assist in entertaining the poor lunatic lady. "Beg her pardon," he cried, correcting himself—"no more lunatic than I am. I mean my niece, my dear Agnes. Zooks, Madam! you wouldn't know her again—at least I didn't—quite an altered creature. Why, Allan, my boy! how much better *you* are looking too! Ay, ay, we shall be all happier, all healthier, all looking better now. Master of my own house again. Ha! ha!" There were good grounds for this improved appearance in Allan. His native air and the society of his family had, as he predicted, soon restored the healthy hue of his cheek; the work of fiction upon which he had been diligently employed for some months had enabled him, by its sale, to replace the sum abstracted from the joint stock of himself and his brother; time and constant occupation had mitigated the sense of his recent mistakes and disappointments; and he had received several most gratifying letters from Isola, couched in terms of the warmest

friendship for her dear brother, as she still called him, and exuberant with an impassioned gratitude to Heaven for her own unalloyed felicity. Everything had succeeded to her utmost wishes. Her husband's father, not only reconciled to her marriage, but delighted with it, when he heard of the fifteen thousand ducats, had gladly given up the business, which was flourishing even beyond their expectations. Camillo had bought the little cottage which had belonged to her mother in her native island of Ischia, whither they retired with their boy, whenever they could make holiday, or snatch a short respite from professional occupations. Whether at Naples or at Ischia, she seemed to be equally happy. Her letters were the outpourings of a soul steeped in thankfulness and joy.

Mrs. Latimer, upon whose maternal eye visions of Allan's renewed adoption by Brown already began to dawn, eagerly accepted the invitation to the Manor-House, where their society and good offices contributed so manifestly to the solace and the

cheer of Agnes, that, at the expiration of the fortnight, they were pressed to protract the term for a month. Both had found so much pleasure in the companionship of Agnes, and in witnessing the daily development of accomplishments and mental stores previously unsuspected, that they gladly assented to the proposal. Between Allan and Agnes there was an especial sympathy that drew them instinctively towards each other. Both had bruised spirits which found a congenial consolation in the same subjects and pursuits; both being passionately fond of music and of literature, they sang or read together, selecting such graver strains as were adapted to their present temperament. At the end of the first month thus pleasantly occupied, the visit of the Latimers was renewed for another, and this successively for several more, until Brown, finding his own comfort as well as that of Agnes mainly dependent upon their stay, insisted upon their giving up the cottage, and becoming his permanent inmates. Walter and his wife made frequent visits also to the Manor-

House, both of them winning such huge favour in the sight of its master, that he never suffered them to depart without exacting a promise of a speedy return.

As it is the just punishment of maleficence to excite a painful hatred of those whom we have injured, so is it the merited reward of good actions to awaken in us a love of those whom we have benefited. Deeply did Allan feel this gratification as he marked the cheering effect of his kindly offices and attentions upon Agnes. Each had begun by commiserating the other, and the affinity between pity and love is so well known, that we need hardly state the result. From motives of delicacy, however, Allan did not make any formal declaration of his wishes until Agnes had thrown aside her widow's weeds, when he tendered her his hand and heart, and having obtained her blushing consent, proceeded to solicit that of Brown. "What, my dear boy!" was the reply: "and so you are tired of single-blessedness, are you? Well, Sir, you have chosen the

most charming woman in all England, and I give you my consent with all my heart and soul. I must say, however, that *I* never thought of marry——Hallo, though! don't tell lies, you old fool!—you *did* think of marrying, and a pretty business you made of it!"

Walter Latimer's employer having died, and the business being given up, he and his wife were invited to come over to the Manor-House, and to consider themselves its permanent inmates, and a portion of the family. On the morning of Allan's marriage — for he too was married at last — Brown placed in the hands of Agnes a deed of gift of five hundred a year, and at the same time deposited a similar instrument in the work-box of Ellen Latimer, gallantly observing that it was a very inadequate payment for the pleasure he anticipated from their society. These hopes were so abundantly justified, that he makes no secret of his intention to bequeath the remainder of his fortune between the twin brothers.

Unbroken was the concord—great and unalloyed the happiness of the whole party thus domesticated at the Manor-House. Adam Brown, whose inmates took especial care to keep him incessantly occupied, busied himself about his farm, toddled round his grounds and gardens, was driven to visit his neighbours, and to participate in all the amusements of the vicinity; he played billiards, whist, and cribbage; he heard the newspapers, especially the Public Ledger, regularly read to him, and often imagined himself to be enjoying the society of Allan and Walter, while they sat silently beside him on the balustraded platform of the roof, until he had smoked himself into a state of complacent and oblivious drowsiness. Such is the force of habit, that whenever he heard of any approaching nuptials, he would begin to blurt out his usual cackling triumph at his being a bachelor, on which occasions he would suddenly check himself, turn very red in the face, and mutter, as he walked away with a confused look,—"Don't tell lies,

Adam Brown, don't tell lies! Done a wiser thing, perhaps;—made a better speculation if you had married at first, instead of waiting till you were an old man, and an old fool, and then getting married at last."

THE END.

London: Printed by William Clowes and Sons, Stamford Street.